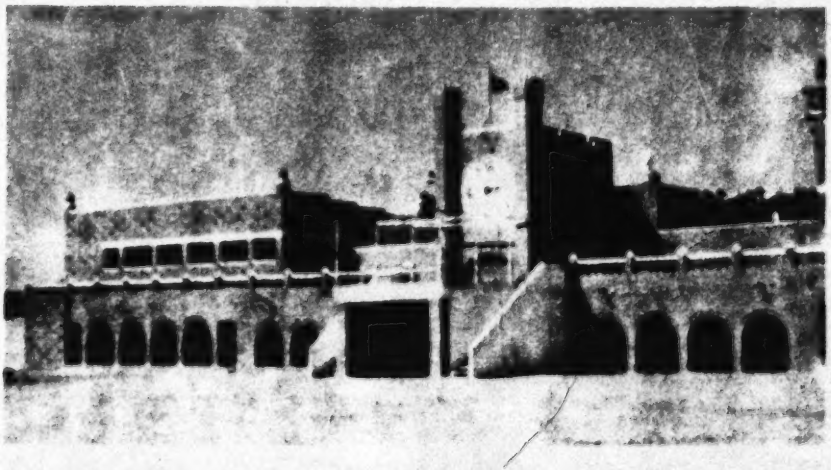
1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

651
234
142
291
352
353
516

(Top) A district head in his reception room; behind him his clients are counting tax returns. The bags on the floor are shillings.

(Bottom) The palace of the Shehu of Bornu.

631
344



1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Geidam in the north, where another anthropologist, Abraham Rosman, and his wife were working. Discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Rosman helped all of us to see many of the unique features of Kanuri life that stemmed from our particular towns as against more general Kanuri patterns of behavior that were widespread throughout the society. We also became acutely aware of the kinds of variations that could occur across communities as they varied in size, ethnic composition, and quality of the political leadership. At the end of the first field trip, my wife and I spent three months in the capital city of Maiduguri looking at government reports and district notebooks, and acquainting ourselves with many of the special activities that characterize courtly life at the center of the emirate.

In 1964 and again in 1965 I returned to Bornu. On my previous visit the country had been a colonial holding of Great Britain, now it was part of the independent nation of Nigeria. My task in this second visit was to gather statistics on marriage and on divorce rates. But it also gave me a chance to see old friends, and catch up on what had been happening locally since my last visit seven years earlier. Some changes were readily apparent. A large number of deep wells were sunk all over the province, and these now provide enough water for a greatly expanded livestock population. Everywhere the cattle are healthier, fatter, and above all much more in evidence. They block roads and are seen herded in large numbers to and fro wherever one wanders over the countryside. Furthermore the people are less afflicted by parasites because the deep water is uncontaminated, as much of it was not during my first visit. There is now a large modern abattoir and a ground-nut oil refinery in the capital city, and in late 1964 the Nigerian railway finally pushed through to Maiduguri to connect the Bornu capital with Nigeria's national railway system. On the other hand, detailed questions about various traditional practices indicated that there have been few changes at the cultural and social level. At the political level where there were English District Officers and other officials of the regional government, now these posts are filled by Nigerians, generally from other parts of northern Nigeria. However it is for the most part correct to use the present tense in describing Bornu, and when this is not true I will attempt to mention the special circumstances that have brought on the changes.

Magumeri, our home for seventeen months in 1956 and 1957, sits on top of one of the ridges of Bornu, and there is a steep climb onto it from the motor road that travels along the bottom of the ridge for most of the year. During the rains, the road runs along the sandy top of the ridge, to keep clear of the large muddy areas formed at the ridge bottom. Magumeri includes approximately 2000 people about half of whom live in surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. It is a district capital and thus has a two-room primary school, a court house, and the large compound of the district head who administers twenty-one village areas, containing 50,000 people, living in an area of approximately 850 square miles. The village has a weekly market on Sunday, and is divided up into a number of wards under the village area head who is also the political leader of its surrounding hamlets and officially the political subordinate of the district head. Except for the fact that it has a somewhat lower proportion of non-Kanuri compared to most others, Magumeri is a "typical" Bornu village in terms of its size, occupational ranges of the population, and influences it receives from the capital and the world beyond the emirate. Indeed this is why I chose to spend most of my time

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

there. That it did not turn out to be "typical" in all respects is not surprising, given the relatively large numbers of people there are in Bornu and the range of variation that such a large population can quite normally exhibit.

For the first week or so in Magumeri, the Bornu Native Authority appointed a young man who was to serve as our interpreter and guide—telling the people our purpose in coming to live in their village and helping us to get settled into our new surroundings. At first the local Magumeri officials found it all hard to believe, and kept asking why we wanted to live right in the village, rather than reopening an old, deserted, and I suspected snake infested and ramshackle government rest house about a mile away. However, they politely accepted our firm desire to live in the village even if they disagreed with the idea. Soon I decided to live at the end of the plaza facing the district chief's compound, across the open 200 yards of sand which stretched between his house and mine. The interpreter helped with all these arrangements, and in the ten days he was with us I took down a rough outline of the entire culture using him as an informant. As an interpreter, he accompanied me to the compound of the village area head and we asked if I could take down his genealogy and that of some of his neighbors in order that people might become acquainted with the kinds of questions I would be asking later on. At the same time, my wife began compiling a short dictionary of Kanuri nouns, verbs, and useful phrases, using our interpreter as her major source.

For the next four months, we struggled to learn the language and to get our house built—it kept falling down all the time we lived in it—and to begin making a few friends. The first ten days had been so rich and fruitful that what came afterwards seemed all the harder to accept. Without the language, very little could be accomplished; we could watch but not ask questions about what it all meant. The local school teacher who knew very little English offered his help. He would teach us Kanuri, he said, help us to understand the customs of the people, if we would help him to learn English. And slowly this exchange blossomed into a close friendship that has lasted through the years. Slowly, too, little phrases of Kanuri conversation jumped out at us as understandable items from a background of unintelligible conversation. In about four months my wife and I could converse haltingly with one another, and in six months we were speaking—with an accent, with bad grammar, and a limited vocabulary—but we were speaking nonetheless.

During this first six months, several significant things happened that affected the course of our work. First, the district head who mistrusted us when we had arrived began to relax when nothing dire seemed to follow from our presence on his doorstep. Eventually he and I became friends and his acceptance of our presence in Bornu, and Magumeri in particular, along with his conviction that I was in fact studying the customs of his people, helped and many others followed his lead. Secondly, I became very ill with hepatitis, and had to leave Magumeri for two months. No one (we were told later) believed for a minute that we would ever return after such a dreadful illness—but we did. And our return was a triumphant one. For several days visitors poured in to tell us what had been happening during my illness, and what was going to happen, and so on. We had come home, we said, and Magumeri made us feel that it was indeed a homecoming.

Slowly but surely life settled into a pattern and my wife and I became identifiable members of the community and known throughout the entire emirate as "the Europeans of Magumeri."

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

daughters of sovereigns were the princes and princesses of the realm. Princesses were often given in marriage by the king to create alliances between the throne and other states, or nobles, or as rewards to trusted followers. Often, one among the princes was designated Chiroma or heir apparent. However, there was no hard and fast rule that the Chiroma either had the title for life, or that having been graced by the title its holder automatically succeeded to the throne. Although there was no special term for royal granddaughter, a king's grandsons who might become princes, if their fathers obtained the throne, were referred to by a special term.

Attached to the royal household by bonds of strict loyalty and obedience were the king's followers, some of whom lived in the palace, while others lived nearby. These, known as Koguna, together with members of the royal family and their followers provided the basis for the nobility of the state. They were of two main types—slave and free—with slaves being divided into ordinary slaves and eunuchs. The slaves originated from the slave trade or from raids made among pagan groups, or from the sons and daughters of slaves. The free nobility came from deroyalized segments of the royal family as it expanded through time and from descendants of nobles. This nobility was the source of personnel for the bulk of the administrative activities of the state. They served as the monarch's personal bodyguard, as messengers, military commanders, tax collectors, trusted spies, praise singers, slave raiders, consuls, and foreign emissaries. From their ranks came the people who bore the major titles of the state. Some of the titles were derived from Islam; others came from earlier times in Kanem or Bornu history. Although much changed in their nature, a number of these have survived to the present day.

In order to administer the kingdom, titled nobles, including the titled women of the royal family, were given fiefs equivalent to what are today village area units. All such holdings were fragmented and dispersed so that no one noble had control over any large portion of the state. The fief holdings varied in size and number per noble and were a measure of the political success of that particular noble at any point in time. The one exception was the Galidima. The holder of this title maintained a large consolidated set of village areas on the western boundary to protect the east-west trade and guard the western approaches to the capital city. The fief-holders raised militia for the monarch and taxes for themselves and the monarch. They also served as an appeal court system for the local people when they wished adjudication at higher than the local level. Thus people could obtain a royal audience by going through the fief hierarchy. The Kanuri also used the widespread Sudanese practice of dividing the kingdom into quadrants based on the four cardinal directions. Over each quadrant was a highly trusted follower of the king who could oversee the administration of his own quadrant, raise direct royal tax levies, and serve as an alternative form of hierarchy between the people and their ruler. The system functioned in this way as a check on the power of fief-holders, since the king could take fiefs away and redistribute them if there was sufficient reason for doing so. Through their own subordinates these quadrant leaders also administered the nomadic peoples of the kingdom who could not be easily worked into the administration of the fief system based as it was on settled populations. Two of the four leaders were always eunuchs, making for an automatically free power of appointment by the monarch, since these men had no heirs. The other two were always chosen from among the king's closest associates, although there was also a

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175 642 631 [634] tendency for these two titles to be passed on down the male line. Even in this latter case, however, the king could always choose those most likely to be totally loyal to his administration from among the heirs, or even disregard the hereditary rule if he wished and give the title to some other person. The four quadrant leaders also had their own fiefs which they used as the basic support for their large household organizations in the capital.

175 648 Vassal groups and territories paid tribute in kind through their leaders to the treasury of the Mai of Bornu. In the heyday of Bornu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these vassals included a large number of surrounding peoples in what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These subordinate groups were organized in two ways. In the first instance a Bornu consul was appointed to reside in the tributary state to help collect annual tributes and administer the government. This was in effect a kind of conquest and occupation used most often in adjacent and nearby territories. The second method was to leave the territory under the control of its own leaders after they had pledged their loyalty and their intention to pay tributes and give military support to Bornu whenever necessary; they were also expected to provide safety and hospitality to expeditions and caravans going to and from Bornu. Some of these vassal states were caught between two great powers. Such a case were the Hausa of northwestern Nigeria. Caught as they were between Songhai to the west and Bornu to the east they, therefore, paid tributes in two directions, always hoping that someday they could be relieved of these burdens by an increase in their own power or a decrease in the power of one or both of their overlords. Indeed Bornu traditions and written records are almost totally concerned with expeditions against reluctant tributaries who were remiss in the payment of their tributes. On the other hand, there are also accounts of tributary states sending to Bornu for help against external enemies and internal revolts; so the relationship could, and often did, work to the advantage of both the conqueror and the conquered.

175 793 692 The religious and legal life of the state was strongly influenced by the specialized religious practitioners who were steeped in the Koran and Islamic jurisprudence. The chief judge and religious leader of early Bornu was given the title of Talba and is referred to in traditions as "second to the king," or the next in authority to the monarch himself. He and his descendants and client followers knew the Arabic script and thus made up a literate group closely associated with political leaders as scribes, legal advisers and religious functionaries. These men sat in on judicial hearings and advised political leaders who adjudicated on the basis of their own knowledge of the law. Besides the Mai, most noble households kept such religious men within their compounds for similar purposes, and as instructors for the children. Under such conditions the religious leaders were also strong supporters of the state and its power structure.

175 651 Little is known of the details of taxation for the early Bornu kingdom although records are much better for the nineteenth century system. Obviously some form of tax was levied on local fiefs by fief-holders as well as by the monarch who also received tributes from vassal states and a major portion of booty from warfare. As we have already noted, it is fairly evident that royal taxation of the Bornu population itself was carried on through the efforts of the monarch's titled followers who held powers of royal taxation privilege in the four quadrants of the state.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

ma, who when he was in court, sat in front of the throne facing the same way as the Shehu between the two lines. This symbolized his semi-independent status as a holder of a large section of the kingdom rather than a set of fragmented fiefs. Thus the idea of a consolidated set of fief-holdings on the western boundary was maintained. There was a constant threat from the Fulani which made such a move politically expedient.

How much actual power this nineteenth-century court actually had is debatable. Obviously a few favorite advisers who had the ear of the monarch could become very powerful men during the period of their favor. However, who these were seems to have varied throughout the century. Indeed even a place in court might be gained by a very ambitious rural chief, if he appeared often enough and was able to please the monarch by his service and tributes. In the realm of the judiciary some significant changes occurred as well. Before the nineteenth century, as we have already noted, there was a chief judge, the Talba, who was ranked as "the second man" in the state. During the double regency at the beginning of the century, the first Shehu, Laminu, acted as his own chief judge. He was steeped in Koranic learning and is supposed to have had magical powers that enabled him to adjudicate even the most difficult of cases, harshly but with justice. Parenthetically, this power—and not his military acumen and leadership—is considered by the traditions to have been the chief reason why Laminu saved Bornu from the Fulani wars. Later in his rule, sometime in the 1820s, Shehu Laminu appointed two leading religious personages who came from the families of the leading Bornu religious practitioners to the new offices of Liman and Imam. The former took over the major duties of chief legal adviser to the Shehu, while the Imam became the chief religious practitioner in the state. The old Talba stayed with the court of the former dynasty, and after its demise the title became a lesser one in the judicial hierarchy which is where it stands today.

Punishments for misdemeanors were relatively harsh by contempory standards. Adultery on a Muslim holy day could bring 400 lashes to a man or 200 to a woman. It was believed that judges in the capital of Kuka actually set spies upon the populace in search of law breakers. Intentional murder was punishable by death, and the relatives of the dead man carried out the execution by stoning the murderer. Thieves who were repeatedly caught finally had a hand cut off or were tortured by being buried up to the neck, then having their heads buttered or honeyed and exposed above the ground to attract insects. Unpaid debts proven in court resulted in the confiscation of all the debtor's movable property and a fine to the court. The debtor was pinned to the ground by court officials until he consented to confiscation. However, if he obviously had no means at all, the judge dismissed the case with the words, "God send you the means."

All titled officials and even untitled followers of the Shehu could be given or they could inherit, at the pleasure of the Shehu, rights of revenue collection and administration in one or more settlements spread throughout the entire state. These fiefs were granted by the Shehu, nominal owner of all the land in the state. Generally speaking such rights were hereditary in the male line, but the Shehu could diminish or expand the holding of one fief-holder at the expense of another, and a new monarch was expected to patronize his own favorites. Any person holding a fief directly from the monarch was called a chima kura or "the big lord." There

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175 were two types of differently named fiefs, the one where membership was territori-
634 ally based, and the other where membership was ethnic or clan based, that is, based
642 on birth into a particular group regardless of its territoriality. The big lord re-
643 mained in the capital and administered his various fiefs, sometimes ranging up to
421 twenty or more through his representative, the chima gana, or "the junior lords." Each junior lord lived in one of the fiefs of his superior, the fief-holder, or big lord. This junior lord was the highest authority living in the fief and from him one could appeal to the Shehu, being presented by representatives of the junior lord to the big lord living in the capital, and through this latter person to the court of the monarch.

175 This central administration was linked up to a local one. There was a vil-
634 lage head, or bullama, who usually belonged to the male line of the founder of the
622 settlement. However, he was only one among a group of eligibles. If the local junior lord did not like him or the tributes he delivered, then the junior lord could appoint another member of the same line. There are also some records of junior lords shifting the headship to other lineages as well as to persons within the same lineage. As settlements grew in size, sons, clients, and even slaves of the original village head would hive off and form small settlements or satellite communities nearby under the general jurisdiction of the original village head and the local leadership of the founder of the satellite community. These new heads were called mbarma (hamlet heads) as were heads of sub-sections of the original village that had some sort of unity based on occupation or kinship or a combination of both.
175 Thus a big lord with the help of his junior lords could have his fief-holdings ex-
634 pand in size, and he tried to help this process along by not being too excessive in his demands on the peasants, and by protecting them from raiders and other forms of outside depredation. A big lord's wealth and ability to supply militia to the monarch depended upon his success as a fief-holder, so that it was in his best interests to see to it that each fief was well governed. People could complain to other nobles, or emigrate out of the fief, and such indications of mismanagement, if they continued, could lead to the granting of fief rights to someone else. This new big lord could then take over part of the original holding, or in extreme cases the entire fief was transferred to another big lord's administration.

175 A very successful village head—one with a large and flourishing settlement
622 containing many satellite communities—could be rewarded for his increase in
632 power and authority by being brought to the Shehu's court in the capital and given
634 the title of lawan. The Shehu then performed a ceremony in which a turban was
641 placed on the new lawan's head. This meant he was now a member, albeit a local
643 one, of the titled nobility of the state. In this case, he not only paid accession-to-office-gifts to the junior and senior lord which all local headsmen did, but to the Shehu as well. Once having been advanced from bullama to lawan, it was now possible for some of the leading heads of satellite villages to be made into bullama (by the junior lord and the lawan) with their own mbarma or leaders of satellite communities under them in turn. If these inter-related communities developed even further, the lawan might be brought into the capital again and be made officially into an ajia by the Shehu, giving bullama and mbarma under him the opportunity of becoming lawan with bullama and mbarma in turn under them, all under final authority of the ajia and the most senior of the junior lords. By this time the big

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

By the time the big lord living in the capital would have appointed several representatives to this particular fief because it had grown so big. Such fiefs were the ones most likely to fall prey to sub-division at the death of a king and appointment of a new one. For at this time the incoming monarch had to reward his chief supporters with grants of new fiefs.

As in the pre-nineteenth century the political hierarchy served as an appeal court system, and at the very top of the local fief hierarchy the junior lords shared adjudication with the most senior local leader whatever his rank. Usually these very senior political leaders of the fief had koranic scholars, or mallams, who gave legal advice. Serious cases such as homicide were referred immediately to the capital.

The other variety of fief, that based on birth into a particular group, or *jili* is less well understood. The word "jili" refers to variety or kind. The people speak *of this or that jili of soil*, or tree, or person. In using it to refer to a person they give his territorial or settlement background, or ethnic group, or his clan grouping if this differs from his territorial classification. Thus a person can have several jili —ethnic, territorial, or clan. Even patrilineal lineage affiliation can be described under this term. Nomadic groups in Bornu were represented as jili in the Shehu's court by a big lord of the jili (chima kura jilibe); this man was, in effect, the fief-holder responsible for the nomad group. Sometimes he was a leader of the group itself, and at other times he was a trusted Kanuri follower of the monarch. In both cases the big lord of the jili administered the group through his own representative in the group who was, unlike the territorial grouping, the local leader of a nomad clan, or a sub-tribe. Sometimes entire tribal groupings came under one jurisdiction, and at other times or in other sections of the state the tribe would be broken down into subsections based on clan groupings with one or more clans under a single fief-holder or big lord of the jili.

This double fief system allowed the nineteenth-century Bornu government the organizational means of administering both the settled and nomadic populations of Bornu. It also did something else very important, for it allowed the government effective control over the population even when natural disasters such as outbreaks of disease or sudden invasions sent the people into flight. If a large set of settlements had grown up in one territory from an original one, and this area was then beset by some disaster, which made the people flee in several directions, they were still thought of as a jili or a single variety of persons. They were still organized under their old lords, and their old leaders still retained over them some powers of taxation and demands of loyalty. If the entire kingdom was in an uproar —as it was during the Fulani wars at the beginning of the century with people fleeing in all directions—then old leaders, or former leaders, could muster their scattered followers as jili, and the political integration of the kingdom remained intact and viable until new settlements stabilized locally, and the territorial-based fief system could re-assert itself.

Complicating the system was the settlement of groups with fiefs through permission granted by the big lord in the capital. He could be approached by the leaders of a group of craftsmen, or kinsmen, or people of the same ethnic extraction, who requested of him that they be allowed to settle in one of his fiefs. In this case, the special group was directly under the jurisdiction of the lord through his local administrator, the junior lord, who dealt with their headman. In later generations,

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

In later generations they often became a separate fief, or in some cases were absorbed into the territorial organization of the original fief. Again, the big lord might also settle some of his slaves in the fief, or he might ask to settle them in someone else's fief, or be asked by some other high ranking person if he would allow slaves to be settled in one of his own fiefs. Slaves delivered the results of their work on the land, and in craftwork directly to their own master whether this was the big lord of the fief or not. If they were in someone else's fief, presents were sent by their master to the senior fief-holder—the big lord—in the capital. It was also possible for the monarch or the big lord to settle holy men, men learned in the Koran, on a fief and such settlements were generally tax free.

There were two main taxes and innumerable smaller ones. Indeed, in the Kanuri language it is possible to denote the meaning of taxation, a tax on something, by simply adding the suffix "ram" to the activity or the object. Of the two main annual taxes, collected after the harvest, one went to the fief-holder and the other to the Shehu. The big lord collected tax on the basis of assessment of local produce by a special tax messenger who went out to the fief and after conferring with local leaders agreed on the tax. All who cooperated in tax collection kept some for themselves, passing surpluses on up the hierarchy to the big lord. In turn the fief-holder always gave gifts to the ruler upon receipt of their own fief-holder tax. Each year the Shehu appointed his own tax messengers from among the nobility and collected a royal tithe from the various fiefs. These men might and might not be fief-holders in their own right, but very often they were not collecting in their own fiefs. Other taxes were annual fees to local headmen, fees for clearing new land, for using new market space, for adjudication, for craftwork, for irrigation (where present), for extending any kind of privilege, etc. The system was essentially the same for the nomad groups, but one related complication should be noted. The people from dispersed localities owed some small taxation privileges to their previous headmen, even though they now lived in new settlements within new fiefs and were required to pay major taxes to their new settlement leaders.

One final point about the pre-colonial political system should be made. To understand such a kingdom it is necessary to keep distinct at all times the concept of a title from that of an office. The Kanuri kingdom had great rosters of noble titles that through time varied in number, numbers of holders per title, and the name of title. Some pre-nineteenth century titles such as the *Fufuma* or lord of the ancient capital city of Birni Ngazargamo dropped out of use. There were a number of men entitled Shettima while there was only one Digma or one Yerima. The titles are honorific, and even personal names which were attached to originally powerful households have become titles during Bornu's long history. Titles embellish a man's political duties, and even provide some opportunities for furthering his ambitions if their past history, or the activities of a title holder, enable him to manipulate the situation successfully for his own advancement. Offices on the other hand are positions in government giving the incumbent rights, duties, and obligations. An office may almost completely coincide with the title, as in the case of the ancient monarch whose title was Mai for probably a thousand years, and Shehu for the last century and a half. Or again offices can vary independently of titles. Thus the title of Digma which was held by a man with many official duties and much power in the mid-nineteenth century had changed by the end of the century, and the man

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri Ms14

rope. From North African manufacturers came cloaks, shawls, red felt and embroidered hats for men, sashes, trousers, carpets, religious books, spices, perfumes, and later, cowrie shells. From the desert came tobacco, barley, wild rice, dates, salt, natron, camels, and various assorted medicines, especially *drupa,* a herb believed to induce fertility in women. In return Bornu sent back sewn cloth, hides, leatherwork, sandals, feathers, ivory, gum arabic, Korans, kola nuts, and, above all, slaves. Caravans were large, and the trip was long, arduous, and dangerous because of the desert and its marauding inhabitants. However, just how important foreign trade was in the area is difficult to assess. The ordinary man probably used very little of outside manufacture, but at the capital such goods were considered necessities for people having any pretentions to higher status in the kingdom.

The Colonial Change

Using this description of pre-colonial Bornu it is now possible to discuss the kind of changes that were brought into the area by the inception of British rule at the beginning of the twentieth century. The British came to Bornu in 1901, after it had been occupied for seven years by Rabeh who had been intent on making himself the founder of its third dynasty. The British had not only to bring Bornu under the Northern Nigerian Government but to resuscitate its leaders who had not been in control of the area since 1893. At first they simply left the Shehu to do as he pleased, with the exception of waging war and carrying on the slave trade, which they vigorously put down. However, the idea of fiefs being ruled by lords at the capital seemed grossly inefficient, and they soon ordered that the Shehu choose his best fief-holders and that these be sent out to the locality of their fiefs to govern. Furthermore they decided to consolidate numbers of fiefs into larger units which they now called districts. There followed a tussle between the British and the Kanuri over how many village areas and how many districts there were going to be, the British generally trying to limit the number while the Shehu and his advisers generally tried to increase them. Finally a number around twenty was worked out for the districts and then village areas were incorporated into them. In general these village areas approximate the size and location of former fiefs. However the Kanuri felt that the head of a district was like a titled, local, territorial chief of the nineteenth century who has control over a large number of settlements, so he was called *ajia,* which translates today as a district head. Under him were heads of village areas that included a number of satellite settlements—and this village area head was—like the *ajia,* appointed and turbaned by the Shehu. He was therefore called a lawan (village area head) as was the titled head of a settlement with satellites during the nineteenth century. The difference, however, was that now there was no fief-holder or his representative to whom the local headmen were accountable. The district head held his office directly under the Shehu and the village area heads were directly under the district head. Small wards and hamlets were now headed up by bullama and the term for a bullama's subordinate, the mbarma, fell into disuse and has now almost disappeared.

The mode of appointing and maintaining these jobs led to problems which were never really solved. The Shehu put up names for the district heads who be-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175 177 648 634

came a very powerful group of chiefs through whom the kingdom was administered. When these men went to their districts, sometimes they had precolonial ties in these areas as big lords—some of the constituent towns in the district were their former fiefs; sometimes however they were complete strangers to the area. Besides this there was a constant shuffling of different district heads through transfers, dismissals, retirements, and deaths. The various village area heads under each district head were chosen on the basis of investigations conducted by the British colonial officials to find out who among the population had the hereditary right to leadership for a particular local settlement and its satellite communities. Very often there was no tie of previous loyalty between the village area head and the new district head. Previously the problem had been solved by sending out a chima gana or junior lord who represented the fief-holder. He had lived in the fief and created a set of loyal local followers. At first district heads did the same things. They sent out their own representatives—now called chima—to run the village areas in their district for them. This practice was soon discovered by the British and as early as 1910 was declared illegal, although it continued on until well into the 1930s, and there are even some district heads today who admit they use chima to ensure control of their district. In Chapter 6 we will take up this problem again and examine it in more detail within the organization of the district.

175 177 631 64 651

The central government of the emirate has undergone a number of significant changes under colonialism. At first the Shehu collected taxes on settled peoples through the district heads and taxes on nomads through two trusted slave nobles. This proved unsatisfactory to the British who very early in the century changed the system so that each district head was responsible for tax collection on both settled and on nomad populations in his district. This weakened the power of the Shehu, but at the same time (*ca.* 1914) the British began enforcing among themselves the idea that they must deal with the Bornu government through the Shehu and his Council. Thus good or bad reports of the district heads or village area heads had to be officially put through the Shehu giving him a great deal of either protective or punitive power over his district and village chiefs.

175 177 645

After 1914 there was an increasing effort to create a working Council for the Shehu with a modern treasury from which local planning could be financed. Starting with only a few members it has grown slowly through the years to function as a cabinet with a Waziri or chief minister at its helm. Each councilor has a portfolio or Native Authority department, such as Education, Works, Agriculture, and so on, and these have central offices in the capital with representatives spread out in district capitals throughout Bornu. The experience in this twentieth-century emirate has produced Kanuri who now take part in regional and national politics so that men from Bornu sit in Kaduna, Lagos, London, and even at the United Nations in New York.

175 178 634

The movement of fief-holders out into the bush to administer districts produced a district capital where the ajia or district head resides. To this capital he brought his urban followers; and to the village as well came the district judge and his retinue. As the Native Authority departments developed, local representatives of the various civil service departments of the emirate government came out to the district capital as well. This makes the district capital a more complex and urbanized center and has forced the effects of such urbanization to spread widely

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

throughout the emirate. Roads were built connecting the district capitals to Maiduguri, the major city of Bornu and to one another, and district capital markets came to be among the most active because of the increased population in the district capitals not producing their own goods.

In the economic sphere the colonial era sounded a death knell for the Saharan trade. A dribble of caravan trade still exists, but it was the express policy of the British to face Bornu around and turn its trade toward Nigeria and the Nigerian ports. Caravans were heavily taxed, and European trading companies were encouraged to move into Bornu and start circulating cash and cheap import goods. These few large English and French trading companies encouraged the appearance of a corps of Levantine traders who are ubiquitous in West Africa. They take credit from the large companies, giving it out again to large numbers of Africans who buy and sell for them. By the second world war ground-nuts were a well established cash crop, marketed through these companies although controlled by the government. When inflationary boom prices for ground-nuts hit Bornu after the war, the people were ready to take full advantage of it and there was a surge upwards of consumer buying, so that radios, bicycles, and many other industrial commodities became part of local life. On the other hand, judging by the surprise registered in the annual reports of the colonical officials, the government was a little stunned at first to know what to do with its increased revenues. However a host of new improvements began to be an accepted part of life in the public sector, just as new import items became common to the private sector. The most recent of such changes has already been mentioned in Chapter 1. After independence, the digging of deep wells increased the cattle population enormously and has provided a basis for further development in the area. This, then, is the Bornu background. It is a long and eventful one—and the people are proud of it. For an anthropologist, one of the most intriguing questions to ask is "why"—why has Bornu lasted so long in this area? Why has it adapted so well to modern times? It has absorbed Shehu Laminu's destruction of the Sefuwa dynasty, Rabeh's conquest, the colonial overlordship, and national independence in its calm stride. Its leaders and its people are remarkably stable—yet not enslaved by tradition. Indeed they strive to change and develop Bornu and their future is a bright and hopeful one. In the chapters to follow I hope to provide answers to these questions in order that we may ask them again after considering in more detail the quality of life in Bornu.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

If the lawan continued to adjudicate against him and gave him heavy fines, then he should request to take the case to a higher court. Thus the teacher wished his peasant-follower to make his peace with the lawan but if this were impossible, then higher authorities would be resorted to and the lawan's power bypassed. In other words the teacher felt that the political structure of the town should be respected but within limits.

Bukar's problem illustrates how a lawan can make reprisals when he feels that there has been some lack of recognition given to his authority by those under his administration. There are a large number of things in land matters, general disputes, ceremonials, divorces, default of bad debts, assault, housing, and commerce that come within his perview and intersect the lives of his people at a great many points and in many vulnerable ways. Therefore to thwart his authority and then remain within the orbit of his power without the possibility of reprisals would be impossible.

Recruitment to the office of the lawan is officially carried out by appointment from the emirate government at the capital. There is an official investiture ceremony at the capital, as in the nineteenth century, in which the lawan receives a turban from the Shehu of Bornu. In general there is a tendency, but only a tendency, for lawans to inherit the position. Thus one of the male heirs of the lawan takes over his household site and becomes the new lawan after his death. A male heir can be anyone in the male line of the lawan although sons seem to be favored. On the other hand many of the village areas have a history in which the office has gone to a number of men based on their particular relationship to the district head, the immediate superior of the lawan in the political hierarchy. Thus there is also a tendency for the lawan to be appointed from the ranks of the incumbent district head's followers so that the office also tends to shift from one agnatic descent group to another in relation to shifts in the person of the district head.

One other factor is important in the succession to a lawan's office. This has to do with the political allegiance of the lawan in the political hierarchy of Bornu emirate. If a lawan dies, or is dismissed, and he is not friendly to a new district head, then whether or not the district head attempts to replace him depends (a) on what are the lawan's political connections beyond that of his official superior, the district head, and (b) whether the new district head can procure the loyalty of the lawan and therefore enlist him into his own following. If a lawan has very powerful friends in the emirate, then the new district head could incur their wrath by getting the lawan out of office. A lawan is removed from his village area headship for a number of reasons although they can all be subsumed under three broad categories. First the political maneuverings of a district head who wishes to replace the lawan with his own followers. Secondly, excessive migration out of the village area, or complaints to higher officials by the peasants against the lawan, and thirdly, failure to raise enough taxes. These may, of course, be interrelated so that, for example, migration out of the village area would be spotted in the tax returns or by complaints resulting from the lawan's plan to cover up by taxing those who remain more than is bearable, thus bringing on complaints. However, if a lawan is responsive to his superiors, and does not mulct his peasants to the point of hardship, migration, and complaint, he has a fairly secure position in the Bornu political system.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

The District Organization

In Bornu the lawan represents a link between the higher political authorities and the ordinary peasant. To the people in the rural areas he is the most apparent and easily reached member of the ruling classes. Their hamlet and ward heads are leaders but only in a local sense, while the lawan represents the authority of the central emirate government since he is officially appointed by this body. To many ordinary villagers the exact nature of the political organization above the level of the lawan is not at all clear. They know that beyond the lawan there is the district head and above him the Shehu of Bornu, but the various councils and agencies of the emirate government are things they know very little about in detail.

In terms of the emirate as a whole, however, the district head and his organization of the district is the pivotal political focus in Bornu. His is the office through which all central government policies from the capital are translated into action at the local level. Conversely, if there are any disturbances, irregularities in tax revenues, increases in crime, migration out of the district, or failure in any policy goals or action programs, it is to the district head that all the agencies at the center turn for an explanation.

To the lowly peasant the district head is a man in another world, a world of awesome power, riches, and courtly life. A lawan may go abroad to oversee a new well in one of his hamlets, or to mark off the boundaries of a new farm plot, or to take a tax census, but the district head rarely ever leaves his compound except for the occasional trip to oversee nomad cattle taxation, or to appear in some local ceremonial, or to attend the Shehu's court in the capital. When he does venture forth, it is a royal sally to the playing of pipes and drums, with a troop of galloping horsemen and servants brandishing swords, spears, and muzzle-loading guns. Today this is being changed somewhat by the motorcar which carries the district head quickly and silently, but district heads can still create quite a stir when they wish to go forth officially among the people.

The district organization is basically quite simple. Each of the twenty-one districts in the emirate is identified by the name of its principal village (in some cases these are quite large towns), and this latter serves as the district capital. In this capital lives the district head and his followers and all the district representatives of the various emirate civil service agencies. These include such installations as a district courthouse for the Alkali (judge) and a primary school formerly up to the end of Standard IV, now almost universally up to secondary school entrance. Formally, the district head is responsible for the administration of all the village areas and any nomadic population that may be living within the confines of the district.

The district head is appointed and installed by the Shehu in consultation with his council and the local representatives of the Northern Nigerian government. Only high ranking men in the state are considered and almost all the present district heads are sons of men who held a similar position. There is a growing tendency to try to get men who have some western education, but as yet many of the present district heads speak no English and have not attended western schools. In

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

general, the Shehu must feel he has gained a loyal supporter and any suspicion to the contrary would bar an eligible contender from the position. The same applies in the case of members of the Shehu's council and especially its chairman, the Waziri. People say that would-be applicants give gifts, attempt to link themselves by marriage, and in general ingratiate themselves with the Shehu and his councilors who play the major part in such decisions; however such things are not easy to observe directly. On the other hand several people have told me that they regularly visit influential men in the city bringing gifts of cash and foodstuff and generally paying their respects to these men in the hopes that one day when a proper vacancy occurs, they will obtain the office of lawan. In other words this traditional mode of soliciting an appointment is admitted to for the office of lawan.

In the district capital the district head's house is always at the east end of the town plaza and is the most impressive compound in the village. The compound is regarded as emirate property and can only be used while the incumbent is in office after which time he must move out. In addition each district head has his own compound in the royal ward of Maiduguri in the capital with a residing chief subordinate (*wakil*) who appears at official state functions in the Shehu's court to represent his superior. In his rural area the district head has a large group of followers who live in his own compound and the surrounding vicinity. These men form a group of linked households under their leader, the chief follower of the district head who serves as his deputy in the latter's absence. In Magumeri a few of these followers have been recruited during their own lifetime, but most of them are the sons of men who have always been followers of this district head and his father before him.

At first glance these followers are indistinguishable from ordinary peasants except for the fact that some of them have expensive looking horses given to them by the district head. They help collect nomad cattle taxes, run messages for the district head, and never fail to ride in honor of their leader on special ceremonial occasions or when an important visitor has come to town. Most important they must be willing to leave town or move to another place whenever their superior is stationed elsewhere, while peasants are most often linked by social relations with a particular spot. These men have only one allegiance—that of subordination, discipline and respect to their superior, the district head. Thus they are never fully trusted by the more permanent local residents. Indeed younger members of the district head's following are often feared as well as mistrusted. They have no farms, no wives, and no households of their own. They talk, play cards, drink, look for amorous experiences in the local area, and are felt to be spies for the district head. When such men approach a group of peasant menfolk, the conversation suddenly stops, then slowly begins again on a note of pleasant but iridescent chit-chat in which nothing really serious or informative about local affairs is ever mentioned. Although the hierarchy of lawan and bullama under a district head is his official administrative organization in the district, his followers form an unofficial organization to execute his policies. Unlike the lawan and bullama they are totally dependent upon him for support and status in the society. In return they give him the prestige that comes from having a large retinue of followers. They also organize his tax collections, act as messengers, and sometimes they are even used to discipline lawans who are not complying with administration demands. Thus one lawan complained to a district head that he could not raise the tax assessment for his vil-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

lage area. The district head sent out his followers who gathered about fifty percent more than the original assessment and the lawan was then chastised and sent back with the warning that he must comply in the future with directives from the district head.

District heads' followers are outside the usual jurisdiction of those lower in the hierarchy such as the lawan. When they must be disciplined, or brought to court, they go directly to the district head or less often to the district judge by-passing the judicial authority of the lawan. Peasants seeking retribution for bad debts, adultery, or some other malfeasance committed by a district head's follower must then take the matter before the district head. This is the test of a district head's justice, and often he forces his followers to repay bad debts or fines, even though he himself is probably the one who will eventually pay the fine by advancing the money to his follower. In one case a district head publicly reprimanded one of his followers, paid his fine, then privately threatened to stop supporting this follower as his client for having burnt down a peasant's hut while drunk when the peasant refused to allow his wife to be molested by the follower. A district head who continually protects his own followers against the peasants develops a reputation as a tyrant and an inefficient administrator. Given the present government it is difficult to hide bad administration since complaints by peasants to touring officials usually provide information to people higher up in the political organization concerning the activities of a district head and his organization.

As suggested above there is sometimes a strain in the relations between a district head and the various lawans who head up the village areas within the district. Formally he relays directives from the capital to them in their village areas and they are supposed to carry out these policies. However the district head needs cooperation, often for necessary but somewhat semi-illicit activities and thus needs people he can trust in leadership positions within the district. On his side the lawan is semi-independent because he is a salaried official. District heads are constantly trying to win the affection and loyalty of their lawans, or if necessary to get them expelled, or wait until they retire and then have the office filled by one of their own loyal followers. Because district heads are constantly being retired, dismissed, or transferred from one district to another, each new district head is confronted with a number of lawans who are the loyal followers of predecessors who were district heads in the area.

The records of turnover of lawans, especially in the district capital, where they must see the district head continually, show that in general lawans are dismissed or retired most often shortly after the arrival of a new district head. The case of one lawan in Magumeri illustrates this very common occurrence. From 1921 to 1929 a lawan in Magumeri village area was a follower of the district head of Magumeri District. In 1929 a new district head arrived and suddenly the quality of reports by colonial officials changed. Whereas before this man was reported to be cooperative, intelligent, hard-working, and competent, he was now unpopular with the people, there was much emigration from his village area due to heavy taxation, and he was disrespectful to those in authority. In 1933 he was suspended by the Shehu, and a younger brother of the new district head was appointed to the lawan's office for the Magumeri village area. Examples like this are extremely common in the history of all the districts right up to the present time.

As in the example above there is a tendency for the district heads to ap-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

As in the example above there is a tendency for the district heads to appoint younger brothers to the post of lawan within their own districts. However this has its limits. In one case a lawan confidentially asked the British officials if he could be moved to a district away from the hegemony of his older brother, the district head. That same year (1935) there were a great many complaints by the peasants directed to British officials about the harshness of this particular district head's administration. He was warned but did not comply and was later dismissed. The younger brother sensed that trouble was brewing for the older brother and decided it would be more advantageous to his own career if he could move to another district and not get caught up in the difficulties his brother was creating by his lack of good administration. One district head remarked that he had tried to appoint his own brother in a previous district as lawan, but the young man had done a very bad job and it proved impossible for the district head to control him. The younger brother was finally deposed by the emirate government after his older brother was transferred to a new district. Later he came to his older brother in the latter's new district, hoping for another job as lawan in his brother's administration. However the older brother has no intention of doing so because, as he says, this younger brother is a bad man who oppresses his villagers when he gets a chance and this reflects back on the district head. Thus in Bornu the loyalty of brothers is ameliorated in the political system by the requirements of office.

As we have already noted, local representatives of the various Bornu Native Authority (emirate government) departments are stationed in the district capitals. These include people like the district chief scribe who keeps the books on revenue collection, the district judge, the school teachers, some native authority policemen, veterinary, forestry, and agricultural department representatives and so on. The list varies in length from district to district, but there is a general tendency for it to lengthen through time as the departments expand their programs and services. These officials are paid salaries and live in the district capital although they often get shifted from one district to another. Thus only one of these officials in Magumeri had been there for longer than four years and almost all of them had lived in at least three district capitals during the past ten years. They view themselves as a class apart from the local people; they are city bred or at least city educated; they share a common interest in state and national politics; and their mobility orients them to each other rather than to people outside the civil service. When asked who their best friends are they invariably mention other members of the emirate's civil service. Thus they form a class of urban cosmopolitans on the rural scene.

Their relations to the district head are complex and in some ways similar to that of the district head to his lawans when these latter are appointees of a previous district head. The native authority official is not necessarily a follower of the district head, and he does have a separate salary. Usually the official and the district head maintain a respectful but carefully measured social distance from one another. The local officials are often asked to eat at the compound of the district head which emphasizes their common urban upper-class membership and separateness as a group from the rural population. However, they generally do not become members of the district head's following. They have their own careers to follow, and though friendship with the district head is useful, it could also impede their success because of demands made upon them by the district head which might conflict with those of their own departmental superiors in the capital.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

On the other hand the local official must work through the district head if he wishes to carry out his job successfully. Children are ordered into the district school through the district head's office. Forestry reserves are set up by his directive; cattle are rounded up by him. Indeed almost any action involving a response by the people in the district must come originally from the district head. A lawan, if approached for cooperation by civil service employees, would generally refuse to cooperate if he had not been first notified by the district head's office. The district head is a high official of the state while the native authority employee is generally the lowest status field representative of his department. Thus they pay the district head respect, stand up when he approaches them, take off their shoes before entering his compound, and consult him on programs they wish to have carried out in his district.

On his part the district head quickly establishes who the native authority officials are, and what families they come from or are connected to in the emirate. If the district head is closely connected by friendship and political alliance to a high-placed official in the local representative's department, then he may have an avenue of control over this local person through the latter's own superior. On the other hand the native authority employee may be connected with the powerful people in the emirate and the district head then knows that this particular official could possibly bring powerful forces into action if a situation warranted it.

The relationships of the district head to the capital are highly complex and result from the fact that he is the official link between the central government of the emirate and the local political organization of the district. Officially he is responsible to only one body, the central agency of the emirate government which is the Shehu-in-Council. This council, called the Bornu Native Authority Council, under the chairmanship of the Waziri or chief minister, is the highest authority in the emirate. As we noted in Chapter 2, the council acts like a cabinet and each member has a Native Authority department under his direction. District heads receive instructions about policy from the council and directives about programs from each of the departments. The district head delivers taxes to the Native Authority Treasury and must account for his actions to the council which has a major voice in appointing, dismissing, retiring, and transferring district heads from high to low-paying districts or vice versa.

Both during the colonial period and at the present, the Bornu Provincial Government has had several emirates under its jurisdiction, of which Bornu is the largest. Although not officially responsible to the Provincial Government, the district head and his work have always been inspected periodically by touring officers of the Provincial Government. These men can make recommendations which influence the emirate government and during colonial times there are a number of records of district heads being retired or dismissed because of the "advice" of Provincial Government officials. Thus the district head has to be sure his actions are in line with the demands and standards of provincial officials who are today generally from other parts of Northern Nigeria, and were, up to a few years ago, the British colonial officers.

The district head has other links with the capital as well. As we have already noted, he keeps a household in the palace ward of the capital city, and his followers in his compound under a wakil, or chief follower, visit the palace regu-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

larly as his representatives. The wakil also makes regular visits to important emirate leaders and tries to maintain a constant check on political developments in the capital and the emirate as a whole. Through this organization and through the giving of gifts and hospitality to visitors and messengers from the capital, as well as cultivating high placed friends, the district head maintains and builds up a communication network through which he obtains a many-sided picture of events in the capital.

District heads are also linked to the capital by their membership in factions that help to make up the political life of the emirate. In pre-colonial times these factions grew out of the allegiance of nobles to the various segments of the royal lineage. This indeed was the reason the succession disputes to the throne could turn into bloody civil wars. These same traditional factions still exist today, but there have been added new ones which involve close alliances between very powerful men in the emirate government. These reflect the weakened authority of the Shehu, and the increase in power and authority of the Native Authority officials in the top positions of the emirate government. District heads linked to more powerful factions receive better information about the course of emirate politics and more protection when they need it than those related to weak ones. Thus one district head might be linked to a member of the royal family who has no official position in the Native Authority and who has little hope of gaining the throne; another might be closely linked to the Waziri or chairman of the Bornu Native Authority Council. The latter district head, because of his factional membership, is in a much stronger position in the emirate political organization as a whole than is the former. These links to the center both official and unofficial must be carefully developed and maintained by a district head. This is especially true when it is realized that a district head like any other member of the Bornu political system operates within two cultural orientations—one western and the other traditional Kanuri. The district head should give gifts to subordinates, to his faction leaders, and to many other powerful people in the state. From a western point of view these can be seen as bribes, while from a Kanuri vantage point they may be looked upon as obligatory and legitimate recognition by the district head of the power and protection that can be wielded by his superiors in the central government of the emirate. Since such expenses are not provided for in the district head's official salary, the means by which he obtains the wealth to make such gifts often involves breaking rules according to strict western civil service standards, although again such activities might be considered legitimate by local tradition.

The central focus of this behavior revolves around tax collection. The district head is seen in western terms to be an agent of government who collects taxes and is paid a salary for this and other services. However, he needs to maintain a large following who are not provided for by government if he is going to collect nomad cattle taxes. These men must ride out over the entire district—often several thousand square miles—to collect the tax. To keep these men as his tax collectors he needs much more revenue than his own salary. If he does not collect the tax, or enough taxes, he will be punished by dismissal or transfer to a smaller less prestigious district. He has very little choice; in order to keep his own organization going and to maintain friendly contact at the center by gift-giving, he must take some of the district's tax revenue for himself. This makes him vulnerable at all times; to comply with some demands which are deemed important he must break others

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

which he hopes are less important. Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their enforcement change through time, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new council member may have become interested in school latrines and suddenly start forcing compliance with the rules about such things. Failure to do so or to hear about the stringency with which the old previously unimportant policies are now being enforced could bring trouble to the district head who failed to comply. This is why information about policy and the cultivation of powerful friends in the central government is so important for the district head.

Before leaving the rural area a word should be said about adjudication. All leaders in the Bornu political system adjudicate disputes, and the political hierarchy itself serves as an appeals court system. Thus a peasant can take his dispute with a neighbor to his bullama (hamlet or ward head), who may decide to take the case up to the lawan (village area head), who in turn may decide to take the case to the district head. The district head may further decide to send the case over to the district court, and, if necessary, the district court can send the case into the capital city, to the court of the chief alkali of Bornu (chief judge's court). People can go directly to the judge's or district court, and in the city many do. Even with very serious cases like murder which must go into the central court in the city, the people taking the murderer into the city court most often go up the political hierarchy reporting the case each time they see another official even though there is no adjudication, thus giving recognition to their political leaders rather than going directly to a higher court.

Cases are tried by a combination of Muslim law and local custom. The chief or judge listens to the case, and if three witnesses swear for one side in a dispute but not the other, then the side whose witness has sworn wins the case. If no one swears evidence or too many people swear on both sides, then the judge listens while his assistant in the court interrogates the parties involved. The judge, whoever he may be, then makes a decision. Very often the interrogation itself tends to move the evidence towards one side in a dispute or another. Usually if a crowd gathers, one can see by simply listening to the crowd which side of the court case is winning the argument. On the whole decisions are just unless there have been previous and difficult relations between the adjudicator and any of the parties concerned. Swearing evidence in a court is called "eating the Koran"; that is to say, a person must swear on the holy book. If he tells a lie, it is believed that his hand will shrivel and he will die of horrible diseases. This belief is widespread and it is genuinely feared that the traditionally implied consequences of lying in court are in fact quite true.

The Organization at the Center

In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, flanked on one side by the mosque and on the other by the official residence of the Waziri or chief minister of the emirate. The Shehu is the formal head of government. All measures, policies, appointments, made within the state are in his name; titles are granted at official investiture ceremonies carried on in the royal palace and he is the formal leader of the religious community of the state. This is em-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

practically impossible since it meant rejecting your own superiors, not your job, and it would be similar to someone in a household saying he was fed up when he decided to leave. Thus in Kanuri cultural terms, changing a job means rejecting the people with whom one works, and young men claim they would be considered ingrates and trouble-makers if they were to attempt such a thing. Transfers, if they are to be accomplished at all, must be done through relatives and friends who can "visit at night" with the appropriate people and explain the ins and outs of the case so that things can be arranged on this personal basis first before any impersonal bureaucratic procedures are utilized.

On the surface the emirate civil service looks very westernized. There are offices, typewriters, clerks, officials, expense vouchers, committees, memoranda, telephones, employee organizations, etc. However within the service, traditional patterns of association are still very strongly observed. A man lifts the telephone and traditional greetings and modes of address to a superior flow forth and color the conversation. People leave their shoes outside a superior's office, and so on. Under these superficial cultural acts there are other things as well. "Big men" (senior officials) have large compounds linked to a number of clients who live either in their households or close by. Some of these subordinates have positions in the civil service. Others form part of this big man's own group of followers; he must be approached through this group and he uses it to maintain his position and prestige in the state. It is also important to understand that the western concept of loyalty to an ideal of public service is not widespread as yet. Top leaders are committed to the maintenance of order in a just society that is becoming more modern. Within the Native Authority, department loyalties are to one's superiors and personal advancement is through loyalty and generalized obedience, just as it always has been in Kanuri society, and not to an abstract ideal of public service and bureaucratic efficiency. This does not mean that rationalized bureaucratic behavior will not become more common in Bornu. Indeed everything we know about modernization suggests that this is inevitable. However, it does mean that at present the society is not divided into strict sectors, one labelled modern or western, the other traditional. Instead, each of these permeates the other so that everything new and modern is shot through with traditional culture, and everything traditional has aspects of the modern.

Representative Government

For most intents and purposes the political organization of the emirate is carried out within the system of offices and agencies described above. However there are today the bare bones of some other kinds of organization that are quite likely to prove important in the future. During the 1950s and continuing on to the present time, each district has had a local district council. This body is made up of members from all over the district, sometimes the village area heads, sometimes people appointed by them. They meet only a few times a year for one or two days under the chairmanship of the district head and discuss local affairs. These meetings are generally attended as well by members of the departments of local government from the capital. The councils have a budget based on a small proportion of

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

the taxes raised in the district and they meet primarily to discuss the dispensation of these funds. Usually this has to do with items of local improvement such as market stalls in various villages in the district, radios for hamlets and villages, etc. They also draft resolutions asking the emirate government for help in extending roads, building wells, and so on.

The official representative from the capital—previously from the colonial government, now the local government department of the emirate—who attends the meetings provides a link between this group and the central government in Maiduguri. He advises them on what is and what is not feasible in terms of their requests to the central government and also informs them of long-range development policies and plans by the central emirate government.

So far these councils are quite weak. They meet only a few times a year and have a very limited function. However as time goes on they could assume the role of a local legislative and administrative body made up of people who represent the developing needs of ordinary people to participate in decisions affecting their own local areas.

During the last decade or so another form of political activity has come to Bornu in the form of political parties. The traditional authorities, the district heads, lawans, judges, officials of the Native Authority, and all their followers, support the N.P.C. (Northern Peoples Congress) which represents similar interests in other parts of Northern Nigeria and forms the dominant element in the federal government of Nigeria. Several days a week in various parts of Maiduguri, but only rarely in rural areas, public meetings are held under the green flag of the N.P.C. Meetings are usually preceded by drumming and traditional dancing by divorced women. Then party organizers make speeches to the assembled crowds. Sometimes the "big men" such as the district heads or Native Authority Councilors attend these meetings especially around election time, but they themselves and candidates for office do not speak. To do so is considered demeaning for the "big men." Instead party organizers give long, loud harangues extolling the virtues of the N.P.C. and go into great detail about the evils propagated by other political parties in Nigeria.

The overall effect of these political meetings is one of tradition versus its breakdown, good versus evil, ethnic and religious unity and loyalty versus disunity and disloyalty. The real, everyday authority in the lives of the people obviously supports the N.P.C. Thus a vote against this party means much more than a simple political decision to support one contending group of leaders against another; it means that the person is turning against the traditional political structure of the society, and by inference that moral order that holds it together. Listeners at the meetings are constantly presented with moral choices; "are you against our own chiefs, the district heads, lawans, our Shehu?—well *they*, the opposition parties, are; are you against wives being obedient to their husbands?—well *they* are; are you against children being obedient to their parents?—well *they* are," and so on. Stories are told of people whose parents were fine and upstanding citizens who supported and were supported by their leaders. Then their children ran away and supported opposition parties having first rejected the authority, love, affection and support of their own parents. Such people are now vagrants with no families, no proper connections to a respectable Kanuri household, no place in society, and no proper place in the

greatly since that time, as Nigeria is an independent nation today.

The policy of the British in Northern Nigeria had been one of indirect rule. In this manner, a small administrative staff was able to govern a huge area, and the chiefs and Emirs of the North remained the political rulers in their own areas. Bornu Province is divided administratively into five Emirates, though the Emirate of Bornu overshadows the remaining four in geographic area, population, and political importance. The Emirates of Bornu and of Bama are Kanuri. The Emirs of Fika, Biu and Gashua rule over three small tribes, discussed in the preceding section, which are within the sphere of Kanuri influence. In addition to the Emirates, the provinces of the North are divided into districts, and each district has an appointed native District Head. The large Emirates are made up of many districts; the small Emirates sometimes have no more than a single district. Bornu Emirate has twenty-one districts.

Although the British ruled through the existing political system in Bornu Emirate, they controlled all important policy decisions and they had brought about important changes in the political organization of the Kanuri in order to carry out their policies. The actual relationship between the British Resident, who was in charge of the province, assisted by his staff of District Officers, and the Shehu, his Waziri and the Shehu's Council, differed radically from that officially stated. Although the British administration claimed to be merely advisory, it was

648 the actual administrative power. The twenty-one District Heads
648 in Bornu Emirate were appointed by the Shehu, as was the Waziri,
643
634 and the members of the Shehu's council. Although these appointments formally need not be approved by the British administration, in practice their approval was necessary.

634 The system of District Heads replaced the feudal absentee
175 landlords who controlled Bornu in the latter half of the nine-
631
178 teenth century. Many peasants still refer to their District
[651] Head as chima, the name for the feudal lord of former times, since one of the main functions of the District Head is the
[329] collection of taxes. Although many commoners continue to view the system today much as their ancestors looked upon the political system during the days of the Bornu Empire, radical changes
[642] had been brought about. Under the empire actions and decisions of the feudal lords were subject only to the disapproval of the
[648] Shehu, the absolute ruler. Today a still larger political unit, the government of Nigeria, maintains a legal system which protects all citizens though they may not be aware of it. A Kanuri could appeal out of his own political system, and seek the protection of a British District Officer against the ruling of his own Village Head or District Head. Obviously such a move might have serious repercussions and not many individuals decided to take the step. Nevertheless, the alternative existed.

692 In accordance with the British practice of ruling through
779 native institutions where possible, the formal legal system of Northern Nigeria continued to be Islamic law, more precisely

175 Kukawa while their slaves and subordinates administered their
565 lands and collected taxes. Slaves of the Shehu could them-
631 selves be chimas, and in fact some of the highest titles--
[567] those of Kaigama (a general of the army), and Mastrema (a
[634] eunuch) were reserved for slaves of the Shehu.

175 The "knights" of the Shehu were titled lords, who served
631 as his kabuna. Each lord also had his own kabuna, who vowed
565 allegiance directly to him. The kabuna of the lord actually
567 administered his lands while he lived in the capital. Many of
them were his slaves, but just as slaves of the Shehu could
themselves be powerful nobles, so too slaves of a lord who
were his kabuna were powerful individuals in the villages under
[632] the jurisdiction of their lord. From his kabuna the lord se-
[627] lected the most trustworthy and rewarded them by having them
appointed town heads (Lowan), or to a lesser extent village
heads (Bulama). The Lowan of a town was directly involved in
administering his town, in adjudicating disputes through arbi-
tration and in collecting the property tax (hara ji).

• 634 It was said that the chima was almost the absolute author-
173 ity in his lands. If he saw a horse that he wished to have or
642 a woman whom he admired, he could have them simply by indicat-
ing that he wanted to possess them. No man would refuse him
[643] directly. However, if reports came to the Shehu that a chima
was acting irresponsibly the Shehu could reprimand the man,
175 and could even remove his title from him. Any man could ap-
643 peal directly to the Shehu for justice. The power of the Shehu
642

175 643 642 was indeed absolute. Only the advice of his Imam or of his Koranic Malams might sway or alter his decisions, but this was no more than advice. It might be pointed out to him that a particular course of action was counter to the writings of the Koran, and he might ignore the advice at his peril, but the ultimate decision was his.

2. The Political Organization of the Empire in the Twentieth Century.

175 648 642 178 In 1893 the empire of Bornu suffered what seemed to be the final blow. An army under the leadership of Rabeh, a follower and foster son of Zubeir Pasha of the Sudan, defeated the army of the Shehu of Bornu, overran the empire, and for seven years subjected it to their plunder. In 1900 the French captured and killed Rabeh. Two years later the British entered Bornu. Their first act was to restore the line of the Shehus to the throne. Thus, the empire of Bornu was perpetuated by the colonial powers, though itself unable to resist attack successfully. Restoration by the British brought about a continuation and revival of the old political organization which persists into the present. Through this structure, with some additions and modifications, the British ruled for 58 years in Bornu.

175 648 634 178 From the point of view of the Kanuri villager, the political system under the British was hardly different from that under which his father had lived before the coming of Rabeh. The British did away with the chimas, replacing them with District

175 Heads or Ajias. The only important difference between the two,
178
648 from the point of view of the Kanuri farmer, is that the Ajia
634 lived in the capital of his District, while the chima lived in
[642] Kukawa. There were, in fact, great differences between the two, because the British Resident ultimately controlled all policy decisions at the upper levels. But the Kanuri villager knew little of this. It is striking to note how many of the District Heads in 1956-1957 were the heads of the same noble families from which the chimas of the last century were chosen. The British, with or without knowing it, had kept the aristocratic families in positions of political power, at the same time preserving the old political structure of the empire.

175 The Ajias, in their turn, have kept their own kabuna to
634 help them in administering their districts. From their kabuna
632 they have selected the most trusted to serve as Lowans. Since many of the Ajias came from the nobility, they had many slaves whom they inherited from their fathers. These were frequently their most trusted kabuna, though not all kabuna are slaves. Many of the Ajias are slaves of the Shehu, and many of the Lowans are slaves of the Ajias. Ajia and Lowan alike settle disputes, and collect taxes, their two most important functions.
[692]
[651]

C. Religion

779 The Kanuri are Moslems. Islam entered Bornu in the elev-
[175] enth century, and since that time has spread throughout the entire Kanuri population. Unlike the Hausa, where a large part

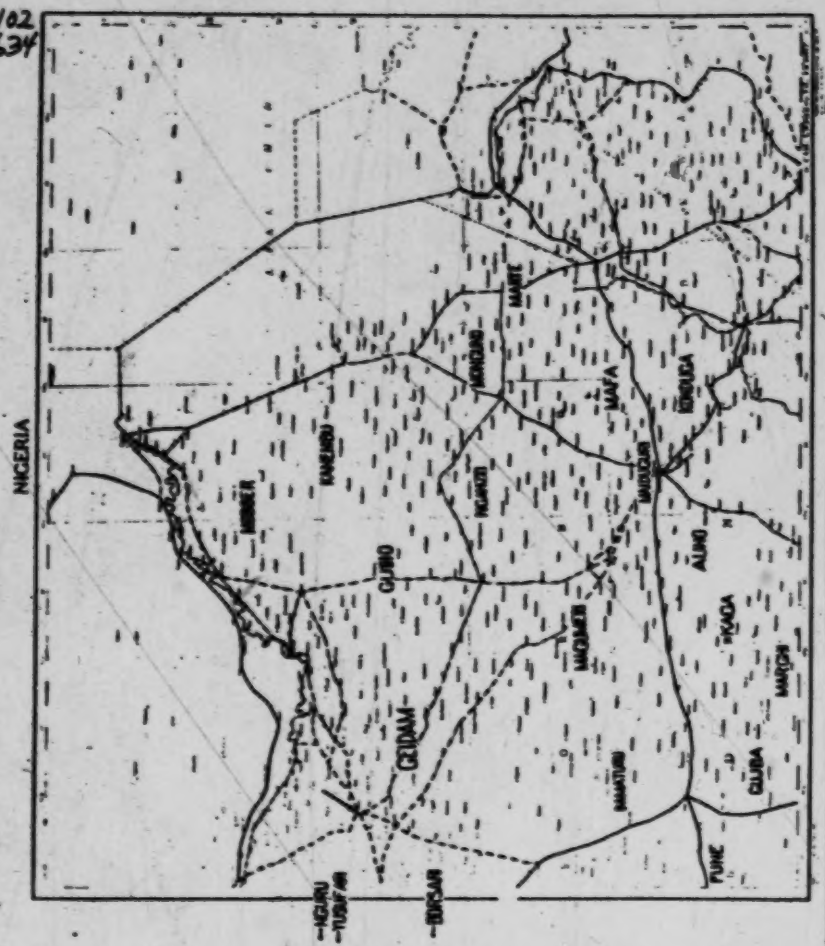
698 642 178 565 ence, British administrative officers made all final policy decisions. Since the system of social stratification finds its support in the political organization of the Kanuri state, and since that state is no longer the ultimate authority of the land, one might expect great changes in the social system today. While significant changes have been occurring, the old system of social stratification has been able to survive, in certain respects supported and bolstered by British colonial rule. It continues to shape Kanuri society today and to adapt itself to new conditions and new demands.

[643] The Shehu and the royal family are still present, and the Shehu continues to wield political power. Though a British resident was the ultimate authority, he acted through the Shehu [829] and the Shehu's council. In the eyes of the Kanuri people, the Shehu still was the symbol of the Kanuri state, though all Kanuri recognized that the White man (nasara) was present as super-authority.

178 565 634 Titled nobility are still present, and retain much of their political power since they still control the great majority of District Headships. It is striking to note how many Ajias, who replaced the chimas of old, are the heads of old noble families and the present holders of great Kanuri titles, [829] both slave and free. The descendants of the chimas are the bulk of the Ajias, so it is not surprising that the talaka continue to view them as chimas and to use the term in referring to their present Ajia.

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 MS14 Kanuri MS14

102
634


NIGERIA
KUKAWA
KUKAWA
MAFA
BIU
DIKWA
NGURU
GUJBA
GUBIO
MAIDUGURI
MAIDUGURI
MAIDUGURI

[GEIDAM]

366 . The Geidam market-place represents one such focus of communal activity. It is an area 186 yards by 150 yards, with rows of permanent stalls made of grass mats, and occasional trees.
443 People are present in the market every day, buying and selling, but these are few in number and are limited largely to sellers of food staples. Wednesday is market day in Geidam, and on that day, thousands of people crowd the paths and the stalls, chatting, bargaining, buying and selling. People come into Geidam from a radius of ten to fifteen miles to attend the Wednesday market; and literally everyone in the town visits the market-place on market day at some point during the day.

301 632 As was mentioned earlier, every Kanuri town is built in a "U" pattern around an open plaza, the dandal. The over-all U-pattern is still apparent in Geidam, but since Geidam is a large town whose growth has been uneven, expansion has destroyed the [634] symmetry of the physical plan of the town. The dandal is still very much in evidence, and at its eastern face is the Ajari, the [351] compound of the District Head (Ajia) of Geidam. The dandal leads directly to the gate, or chinna of his compound, which forms a second important focus of communal activity. Much administrative activity occurs in the cleared area before the chinna of the [527] Ajia's compound. In addition, much ceremonial activity, involving displays of horsemanship by the men serving under the Ajia, [526] takes place before the chinna of his house. Many forms of recre- [535] ation, dancing and wrestling, are also held at the head of the dandal, while multitudes of townspeople gather along the borders of the dandal to watch.

ooo and religious activity.

2. Wards and Neighborhoods.

632 [634] Since the town of Geidam is the administrative center of Geidam District, the Ajia of Geidam is the central political figure in the town. A town itself, however, is administered by a Lowan. Formerly, Geidam had one Lowan; however, as the town grew in size, it was subdivided into wards (nguro). Geidam has three wards,and each has its own Lowan. Each of the wards has its own character, and although many activities have reference to the town of Geidam as a whole, other activities are limited [563] to a ward, or centered within a particular ward. Two of the wards are almost entirely Kanuri and have Kanuri Lowans; the third is predominantly Hausa and has a Hausa Lowan.

The "U" of the town surrounding the dandal represents the center of the old town and is solidly Kanuri. This is the ward of Lowan Ashek, a kabuna of the Ajia. Political and administrative activities of a higher order center in Lowan Ashek's ward. The overwhelming majority of the Ajia's kabuna (47 of the 54 kabuna) live there. A small section of the river area falls under his jurisdiction as well since his ward stretches [732] westward to include the river-edge. At the northeastern tip of Lowan Ashek's ward is the section where the blind live.

The second Kanuri ward is under Lowan Kolo Kolo, who also is a kabuna of the Ajia. His ward is largely but not entirely Kanuri. Under his jurisdiction is the market and most of the

425 671 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a sufficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by the new owner.

425 695

241 565 592 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head [465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment

241 565 464 [175] in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new approach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm

241 427 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable location. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced.

241 634 [425] The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land alloted to him. Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to

241 634 [554] him, are given land from that belonging to the Ajia, should they desire to farm for themselves. Such a plot may be in a more or less desirable location depending on the man's importance and his rank. Many of the Ajia's kabuna have their own plots which they farm. In addition, the Ajia has his own personal farm close to Geidam, which is worked exclusively by his kabuna. All kabuna, important and minor ones alike, under the supervision of the Ajia's Assistant (Wakil) farm the Ajia's land for him.

241 693 466

Table II

241 463 565 554 Percentage of people in Geidam who farm

	Yes	No	Farmed last year
Aristocracy	3	2	1 did; 1 not for 15 yrs.
Koranic Malams	2	1	no
Canteen traders	6	0	
N. A. Malams	3	1	farmed last year--only in Geidam 1 1/2 mons.
Kabuna	1	5	3 did; 2 didn't
Craftsmen	3	0	
Talaka	3	4	1 did; 3 didn't
Low-status	2	2	1 did; 1 didn't
Total:	23	15	7 did; 8 didn't farm last year

Not all the people of Geidam farm. As may be seen from Table II, 23 of 38 individuals questioned had a farm of their own (61 per cent); 15 did not have a farm (39 per cent). Although all who live permanently in Geidam and pay taxes there

64 the ruling body in Bornu Emirate. Native Authority (NA) officials, under the overall jurisdiction of the Shehu, are appointed by the Shehu's council (modulɔs). These include the Ajia, the highest official representing the NA in a district, 634 and all the lesser office-holders in that district. In Geidam District, Yerima Mustapha is the most important political fig- [693] ure. Second in importance to Yerima Mustapha in Geidam is the Alkali of Geidam, Alkali Baba Kura Imambe, who served as Alkali in Geidam for most of the year in which the present [632] study was done, and then was promoted to a higher court. The three Lowans, Lowan Ashek, Lowan Kolo Kolo, and Serɔkin Garba, Lowan of the Hausa ward, follow. Their jurisdiction is limited to their own wards within the town. Then follow a long list of officials, all NA appointees, each with his own area of specialization: the Chief Scribe, Treasurer, Primary School Headmaster and three teachers, Agricultural expert, Veterinary, Hides and Skins Inspector, Forestry expert, Local Government Advisor, Adult Education Organizer, Dispenser, and Sanitation Inspector. The Chief Scribe and the Treasurer both have assistants. Lowest of the NA officials are the NA messengers. Six NA messengers are attached to the Ajia of Geidam; one NA messenger serves the Alkali.

Most of the officials listed above serve the district of Geidam, though all are permanently stationed in the town. The Ajia and his staff, headed by the Chief Scribe and the Treasurer, are responsible for the administration of the entire dis-

[GEIDAM]

634 692 872 trict. The Alkali is in charge of the Geidam District court, a grade 'C' court according to the British ranking system, but the most important of the district courts. The Headmaster and his three teachers run the Geidam Primary School. The various experts, such as the veterinary, dispenser, etc., are all educated men who have been trained in their specialty. They are, however, NA appointees and are directly under the authority of the Ajia. Only the Lowans are concerned solely with the town itself, and they, too, it will be seen, are directly responsible to the Ajia.

648 634 The British instituted a formal Village Council, with an elected membership of fifteen to twenty. The Ajia is Chairman, and Alhaji Amadu Kolon, an important canteen owner and trader, is the elected vice-chairman. There is also a District Council similarly instituted, with the Ajia again as Chairman. Its twenty-five to thirty members are all Lowans of Geidam District, save for four or five. In contrast to these formal councils, there is an informal and traditional Kanuri council which consists of the people who come and sit at the gateway (chinna) of the Ajari while Yerima Mustapha is arbitrating disputes. It is made up of a shifting membership, some more permanent than others, which includes important kabuna of the Ajia's, NA officials who are in a special relationship with the Ajia, and some of the important citizens of the town.

634 692 Only the Alkali is not under the direct authority of the Ajia, and in theory the courts and the executive branch, repre-

634 692 sented by the Ajia and those under him, are supposed to operate independently and to serve as checks on one another. In Geidam, Yerima Mustapha and Alkali Baba Kura work together very closely. As will be seen, the system of social stratification and the personal histories of the Geidam power elite operate to prevent the independent functioning of the several arms of 178 648 63 government. When the social system persists and old Kanuri values are adhered to, as happens in Geidam, the traditional political system continues to operate despite new forms instituted by the British colonial rulers.

177 178 625 698 The manner in which this occurs can be seen most clearly in the following example describing the functioning of the police in Geidam. Nigeria has a dual police system: the Nigerian Police, an arm of the Federal Government, and NA Police, part of the Native Authority system. The Bornu NA Police are under a European Assistant Superintendent of Police, stationed in Maiduguri. Among his important concerns is the theft of livestock, particularly in the northernmost districts, since cattle are easily moved across the frontier and sold in Niger, out of [661] the jurisdiction of the Bornu NA Police. The Assistant Superintendent of Police had strong suspicions that collaboration between thieves and political officials on both sides of the border was preventing the apprehension of criminals. He thought that Lowans and Ajias might be hiding and protecting thieves and sharing in their profits. Consequently, he considered it imperative that the Police operate independently of the other

his allegiance to the Ajia who might otherwise be tempted to replace him with one of his own men.

The kabuna represent a special category in the administration of the district. The colonial administration makes no provision for the kabuna; they are not NA appointees as are all the other officeholders mentioned above; they receive no salary. Yet, the services which they perform are vital if the district bureaucracy is to continue to function smoothly. The kabuna represent a traditional Kanuri social category whose roles are primarily in the political sphere. The roles of the kabuna have been slightly modified and adapted to the modern situation, but the relationship between kabuna and Ajia and between kabuna and populace is a traditional one and is once again typical of the persistence of the old social stratification system into the present.

Yerima Mustapha has fifty-nine kabuna at Geidam. Some are slaves; some are free. Many have been with Yerima for years and years. Head of all the kabuna is Wakil Ali, a slave. The kabuna are each given a house to live in, a horse belonging to Yerima, a plot of land to farm, and ceremonial trappings for themselves and for their horses. In turn, they swear allegiance to Yerima and work for him.

2. A history of important office-holders in Geidam.

The present town of Geidam is on the site of an old town called Dɔmjeri. Five miles to the west of the present Geidam

[GEIDAM]

175 [103] was an old town called Geidam Balara, from which the town today takes its name. In the eighteenth century, when the capital of Bornu was at Birni Ngazargamo not far off, Geidam was part of the Mai's lands. Later, when Kukawa became the capital, and the Mais were replaced by the Shehus, Geidam became part 175 • 634 [632] of the fief granted to the Imam. Since Geidam District is very large, it was divided among a number of chimas. The town of Geidam (Domjeri and Geidam Balara, at that time) was controlled by Kazella Ibrahim Geidama, a slave of the Imam who served as chima gana (literally little chima--serving the real chima who lived in the capital). Geidam was a kalyari, an area under the authority of a slave.

The first Ajia of Geidam, in the early years of the twentieth century was Kazella Sulama, a slave of the Shehu's. He was followed by Aba Rəfəgə, a son of Shehu Ibrahim, who served [646] as Ajia of Geidam until his death in 1915. Maiduguri had not yet been built and the Mounted Infantry, along with many Europeans, were stationed in Geidam. Aba Rəfəgə was the most important of the Ajias at that time. Kazella Kakami (Kaigama) then became the Ajia of Geidam, where he served for almost thirty years until his death in January, 1944. Kaigama Kakami was the son of Kaigama Bilel, the commander of the army during the days of Shehu Laminu. His son, Kaigama Zubairu, succeeded to the title of Kaigama and to the office of Ajia of Geidam. Kaigama Zubairu remained Ajia of Geidam for ten years, until he was demoted to a smaller district, Domboa, in 1954. In 1954 Yerima

[GEIDAM]

175 Mustapha, another holder of a great title, was promoted from
634 Magumeri District to Geidam District to replace Kaigama Zubairu.

175 Yerima Mustapha is of the family of Shuwa kabuna who came
634 into Bornu with Shehu Laminu. The Shuwa and Kanembu nobles who
554 entered Bornu at that time did not bear Kanuri titles. How-
[167] ever, as they were the heads of Shuwa and Kanembu lineages (jili), their own names took on the semblance of titles. Two such titles which were perpetuated within Yerima Mustapha's family were "Laminu" and "Malam Tərab". Laminu Jitia, a sister's son of Malam Tərab, succeeded as head of the house of Malam Tərab, who had been the chima over Magumeri at the time of Shehu Umar (son of Shehu Laminu). The position of head of that house, with the accompanying title of "Malam Tərab" passed out of the hands of lineal descendants in succeeding generations when the Shehu appointed non-family men to the position. A son of Laminu Jitia, Aba Sanda Kura, was made Ajia of Magumeri, the original fief of Malam Tərab. He then took the title "Laminu", so that a new Kanuri title was created. Still later, the position of Ajia of Magumeri passed out of the hands of the "Laminu" family. The present Yerima Mustapha, a great-grandson of Laminu Jitia, held the title of "Laminu" from 1926 until 1938.

159 Yerima Mustapha was born in 1901. He received a primary
634 school education and became a Sanitation Inspector and Vac-
554 cinator in 1924. In 1932 he was made Ajia of Fune District, where he resided first at Ngəlzerma and later at Damagum. At that time he used the title "Laminu." The present Shehu of

159 634 564 Bornu, Shehu Umar, succeeded to the throne in 1937. A year later he conferred the title of "Yerima" on Yerima Mustapha. The title "Yerima" is one of the highest Kanuri titles. It had been held by a Kanuri family, but at the time that Yerima Mustapha succeeded to it, the last title-holder had left no sons. Several members of the Shehu's own family sought the title, but it was given to Yerima Mustapha because he had been close to the Shehu, though his own family had no claim to the title of "Yerima." In 1943 Yerima Mustapha was made the Ajia in Magumeri where his family had lived for generations. He replaced the dismissed Aba Jatau, son of Shehu Garbai, as Ajia in Magumeri. For eleven years Yerima Mustapha remained in Magumeri; in 1954 he was moved to Geidam District, the largest in the province, after Kaigama Zubairu was demoted.

175 632 634 The personal history of the Lowans of Geidam is intimately bound to the history of the several Ajias who have governed in the district. In the course of the eleven years that Yerima served as Ajia of Magumeri a number of his most trusted kabuna were appointed as Lowans in the district. When Yerima left Magumeri, among the heritage left for the Ajia who replaced him, Digma, were the many Lowans who had sworn allegiance to the departed Ajia. They included Lowan Maina, Lowan of Magumeri town, formerly Yerima's Wakil. In identical fashion, Kaigama Zubairu left Lowans in Geidam who had been his kabuna previously. The two Kanuri Lowans of Geidam at the time that Yerima came there were Lowan Ashek and Lowan Kagu. Lowan Kagu

[GEIDAM]

175 632 634 was a very young man, whose father had been a Lowan under Kaigama before him. In fact, years earlier Geidam had had one Lowan instead of three--and the single Lowan had been the grandfather of Lowan Kagu. Then the town was split into three wards, each with its Lowan. At that time, Lowan Ashek, who had been a kabuna of Kaigama's and his slave as well, became a Lowan. Lowan Kagu's father was also made Lowan of a ward, succeeding his father; and the young Lowan Kagu in turn succeeded his father at his father's death.

175 632 634 66 The Lowans of Geidam were loyal to the departed Kaigama, but now it was necessary to demonstrate that they could transfer their loyalty to Yerima Mustapha, the new Ajia of Geidam and their new master. Lowan Ashek, an older and more experienced man, was able to do this. He became one of Yerima's kabuna, and while he is far from the most trusted of Yerima's men, he continues to serve as Lowan under Yerima since he knows the people of his ward well and had been performing the job for some years. Lowan Kagu was young, and was unable to control his feelings in the face of strains created by the situation. He, too, might have bridged the difficult transition as Lowan Ashek had done, had he had more experience in office. As it was, he was dismissed shortly after Yerima's arrival because he lost his temper in an argument with Yerima and threw a book in his face.

Yerima was then free to appoint one of his own men to replace Lowan Kagu. When he was approached and asked whom he

wished to have as the new Lowan, he replied that he was indifferent. The name of Kolo Kolo was then submitted to the town council, the only name submitted. Eight council members voted for Kolo Kolo as new Lowan; two wrote in other names. Kolo Kolo then became the new Lowan. He had been a resident in Geidam for twenty years before Yerima came to the town, and had been an important dilelma dealing in cows. Kolo Kolo is of the same family as Yerima's mother. When Yerima came to Geidam as Ajia, Kolo Kolo joined him as a kabuna, one of the more important kabuna. At the first opportunity he was made a Lowan. He is a good choice as Lowan as he has long been a resident of Geidam, and is acceptable to the townspeople. At the same time, he is a kabuna of Yerima's, and is completely devoted to Yerima, who made it all possible. Yerima bears no grudge against Lowan Kagu. He specifically states that if Lowan Kagu, who is still a young man, has learned from the experience and can demonstrate through his behavior that his attitudes have changed, he may well be appointed Lowan again, should a future opportunity arise. Indeed, it appears that Yerima would welcome this, were he assured of Lowan Kagu's loyalty to him, as it would smooth over old rifts and would restore Lowan Kagu to a position which had long been in his family and to which he was entitled.

The courts in Bornu are intended, theoretically, to operate independently from the political arm of government, and in particular to be free of all influence from the Ajias. The

000 unduly exploiting the populace.

651 The second duty is to collect taxes. These fall into two categories: haraji--a tax on houses, sheep and goats, and [563] other forms of property and jangali--a tax on cattle. Since cattle are so important in the economy of the area, much tax revenue is derived from jangali of which there are three forms: nomad jangali, collected from the semi-nomadic pastoral peoples, Kwoyam, Buduwai, Shuwa Arab, and particularly Fulani, by far the largest pastoral group in Geidam; village jangali; [632] road and market jangali. Haraji and village jangali are collected by the Lowans of each village. Within the town of Geidam, road and market jangali is collected by Lowan Kolo Kolo [634] since the market lies within his ward. Nomad jangali is collected by the Ajia.

651 632 634 Several months before haraji is to be collected the Lowan compiles a list of all tax payers under his jurisdiction. This list is sent to Maiduguri and then to Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region, for inspection. On its return to him, he collects the haraji tax. In Geidam District a kabuna is sent off to each Lowan in the district to be present when the lists [648] are compiled. This is counter to British colonial regulations which are designed to make the Lowan independent of the Ajia, [626] and responsible only to the provincial administration. Yerima's argument, however, is that the Lowans will not properly assess their villagers unless a stranger, the kabuna, is present to assure that they do not under-assess in making up the lists.

~~oc~~lists.

651 The essential problem in the collection of nomad jangali is to find the cows and their owners, who are wandering in search of good grazing, and who are most likely to wander into the deeper thickets when the time for jangali collection nears. Once the cattle owners and their cattle are found, their names are recorded along with the number of cows which each man owns. Then, as he usually has no cash, it is necessary for the owner of a herd of cattle to sell some of them so that he can obtain cash with which he will pay the jangali tax. After his name is recorded, he does not attempt to evade payment. He is then given several weeks to pay his tax. Nomad jangali rates are [687] five shillings for each cow. If a man attempts to conceal cows, if he reports that he owns a number of cows and then is discovered to have more than announced, he pays at the rate of ten shillings per cow.

651 - 654 The prescribed method for collecting jangali is for the Ajia personally to ride after the Fulani and collect the tax from them for their cattle. In a district the size of Geidam [442] this is obviously impossible. It is necessary for an Ajia to have many horsemen in order to canvass his entire district so that he will collect an amount in jangali which corresponds to the actual number of cows in his district. This is the primary role of the kabuna. There are several approaches to the problem of jangali collection, relying on differing tactics, all used by Yerima. One is to assign important kabuna, who can be

651 634 trusted, to large areas. A number of less important kabuna collect the jangali, under the responsibility of the chief kabuna in their area. The wakil, Wakil Ali, tours the entire district. Occasionally Yerima himself tours key sections, accompanied by a special wakil (formerly Wakil Guloma had this assignment, but [he] he has been replaced). A second tactical approach is to keep a certain number of horsemen in reserve. When an unusually large number of cattle are reported in any one area, horsemen are rushed into that area, assuring that all the cattle will be reported and that the kabuna there will not be swamped in their work. A third approach which Yerima used successfully in Magumeri District is to divide the entire district into strips several miles in width. Several kabuna comb a strip moving from east to west looking for Fulani with cattle, while other kabuna are simultaneously combing similar strips to the north and the south. When a group of kabuna have gone through their own strip, they exchange strips with another group and return in the opposite direction.

563 651 In Geidam today the Fulani are organized under Ardos and Mais. A Fulani lineage is under an Ardo, appointed by the Ajia, Yerima Mustapha. When an Ardo dies, his people bring the man that they would like to succeed the dead Ardo, usually his son, to Yerima who appoints him Ardo. The Mai governs over all Fulani in a large area; he has many Ardos under him. In Geidam District there are four Fulani Mais who fall within the territories of particular Lowans. These are Mai Musa, Mai Kusur, Mai

563 651 Maganuwa, and Mai Mar. Several other Mais roam in the brush areas without being attached to particular lowanships. A new man may come to Yerima with a group of Fulani followers and ask to be made an Ardo. If he is appointed Ardo, he is then asked to which Mai he wishes his group to be affiliated. A kabuna sent by Yerima to collect jangali from a particular area records the number of cows reported by the Ardo or Mai for his group of followers in that area. Then the kabuna hunts down the cows [687] and their individual owners. If the kabuna finds that an Ardo actually has more cows than he originally reported, the Ardo is fined five shillings for every additional cow found. Each Fulani Mai receives a percentage of the total jangali collected from his group. The percentage that he receives (wujira) is in the neighborhood of six pence for each pound of jangali collected. The Mai then distributes money to his Ardos, according to the amount of jangali that they brought in.

651 634 When Yerima left Magumeri District in 1953 there were 28,000 cows on which village jangali was paid, and 59,700 cows on which nomad jangali was paid. In 1956, under the new Ajia, Digma, the number of cows on which nomad jangali was paid had dropped to 23,000. The drop in the reported number of cows may be because Fulani have left Magumeri District, but it is more likely that Digma is unable to have them tracked down so that the jangali tax is paid. This is because Digma has insufficient kabuna to do the job adequately. When Yerima first arrived in Geidam in 1953 there were 33,000 cows reported for nomad jangali. By 1956, there were 39,000 cows reported, an

[GEIDAM]

651 increase of 6,000 cows. The tax figures for Geidam District
• 634 in 1956 are as follows:
[652]

village jangali - 30,000 cows		
nomad jangali - 39,000 cows	taxes collected =	£ 17,500
road and market jangali		3,000
haraji		41,000
	total taxes	£ 61,500

Geidam is a large, populous district and the sums involved in
[433] tax collection are correspondingly large. Because Geidam has a large farming population, it has less bush area to accommodate nomadic Fulani and the number of cows on which nomadic jangali
651 is collected is smaller than in Magumeri District. Yerima
634 Mustapha's approach to jangali collection is to reconcile two
563 seemingly conflicting goals. On the one hand he attempts to attract Fulani Ardos into his district; on the other hand he attempts to collect jangali for every single cow within the district. Digma, the Ajia of Magumeri District, doesn't try to attract Fulani into his district, nor can he collect jangali for all the cows already there, though he tours a great deal and covers much of the area himself, which Yerima does not do.

651 The contrast presented by the two Ajias, Yerima and Dig-
634 ma, is enlightening. From the point of view of the British,
663 Yerima does an excellent job in administering his district, and
156 in particular in collecting taxes. The amount which Yerima
[648] brings in to the NA treasure is steadily increasing, and there is no reason for investigating his methods as there are no complaints. Yerima organizes his kabuna, who do the actual work of collecting taxes. Yerima himself does not perform the physi-

[BEIDAN]

651 cal labor involved. Digma, on the other hand, has moved into
634 the district which Yerima left, so that the contrast between
663 the two is particularly marked. Taxes have constantly been
156 declining in his district, and he is continually suspected of embezzling tax money--otherwise how else can one explain the meager sums brought in from such a prosperous district? The threat of investigation and dismissal hovers over Digma, a
[208] nervous and suspicious man to begin with. He is not liked in his district, is not a generous man, and has few kabuna under him. Consequently he is driven to go out and to collect the taxes himself, but the job is far more than one man could ever accomplish and he has only increased worries to show for his efforts. Every failure of Digma's recalls the memory of Yerima, who was respected and liked, who was generous, and who per-
634 formed so well as Ajia. Yerima's success in this as in so
663 many things derives from his keen insight into the traditional
554 social structure and his ability to adapt and use traditional
156 means to achieve his ends. The manner in which he maintains a large corps of kabuna, many of them slaves, and uses their services to his advantage while at the same time fulfilling all the obligations of a great aristocrat, are an illustration of this. Digma on the other hand is unable to act the part of a traditional aristocrat, and constantly lives in fear of those above him.

651 One way of handling the problem of inducing Fulani Ardos
634 to come into a district while at the same time taxing their
563
662 . .

651 cattle is to deal directly with the Ardos and Mais, bribing
634 them with gifts to come into the district. This is highly im-
563 proper, as the Fulani of a district are considered a part of
662 that district. Movement of Fulani from one district to another merely alters the source of jangali, but does nothing to increase the total amount which flows into the central NA treasury. Indeed, one source of concern to Yerima is that the Fulani Ardos of Geidam District will hear that the Ajia of Magumeri District, which is directly south of Geidam and shares with it a long unprotected border, has an inadequate number of horsemen, and will move south into Magumeri District out of reach of Yerima's kabuna, to avoid paying jangali. Should such a movement out of his district occur, Yerima would notify the Waziri in Maiduguri, who would in turn force Digma to patrol his side of the border to prevent the Fulani from moving unnoticed into his district. It is clear, however, that Yerima is not above offering inducements to Fulani Ardos to move into his territory and increase his tax lists.

651 Yerima's overall scheme depends on the stationing of im-
634 portant kabuna who are in charge of jangali collection in their
563 areas. These are as follows:
662

Grema Jisami - responsible for all the territory north of the Yobe River.
Kolo Kime - responsible for the area around Gumsa, and all the Fulani under Mai Musa.
Aba Chiari - responsible for the area around Kusur, and all the Fulani under Mai Kusur.
Kangadi - responsible for the Maganuwa area, and the Fulani under Mai Maganuwa.
Kazella Dokalia - responsible for the Zurukuduk area, but with no single Fulani Mai in his area.

[GEIDAM]

651 Mai Mar, the fourth important Fulani Mai does not have as-
634 signed to him a kabuna in charge of jangali collection from
563 his people. All other kabuna remain located in Geidam town,
66 and are sent out to particular areas on demand. The primary method used by Yerima is to send out horses to areas in which cattle are reported. One aspect of Aba Chiari's job is to let Yerima know if Fulani are crossing over into Magumeri District, as his area is along the Geidam-Magumeri border.

Yerima is willing to reach a compromise in assigning jangali payment to a particular Ardo or Mai which is below the full amount according to the actual count of cattle belonging to his group. If the Ardo is willing to accept Yerima's assessment, then both sides benefit: Yerima benefits because his kabuna have less work to do and can turn their attention elsewhere where it may be needed, the Ardo benefits because the total jangali is less for his group than it would be if every cow were counted. It is through such methods that the Fulani Ardos are induced to remain in Geidam or to come to Geidam should they find themselves in the district of an Ajia who is erratic or uncompromising. Should the Ardo feel that he can get away with paying less jangali than the amount assigned to him by Yerima, on the basis of information given him by his chief kabuna, he might try to hide cattle or to sneak away. Then Yerima would descend on his people with many kabuna and every single head of cattle would be counted and taxed. The threat of Yerima's many kabuna makes this an unwise course of action,

and Yerima has actually carried out the threat often enough for all to know that he means business. It is much wiser and easier to compromise, and to receive gifts for having compromised, than to curry the Ajia's disfavor. In this way Yerima maintains harmonious relations with the Fulani in his district, and indeed with the Kanuri villagers as well, and satisfies the demands of the central authorities at the same time. The system is dependent on the work of Yerima's kabuna, who in turn are supported by Yerima. Ultimately funds to support Yerima's sixty odd kabuna come from tax funds, though this never appears in the accounting of taxes. Absolute loyalty to Yerima is demanded of all his kabuna. A kabuna found helping himself from Jangali, or using his position to extract money from villagers for himself, is severely dealt with.

5. The Roles of N.A. Personnel.

The roles of a number of political figures have been discussed in some detail above. In particular, the roles of Ajia and kabuna, of Lowan, and of Alkali have been examined and in every case it can be seen that traditional Kanuri roles have persisted into the present. The smooth functioning of the political system of Geidam has been attributed to the ability of individuals carrying out those roles, particularly of Yerima Mustapha, in perpetuating traditional relationships and adapting those relationships to the changing present.

However, in looking at the list of office-holders in Gei-

[GEIDAM]

634 dam once again, it is evident that one group is a modern group
178 which has no counterpart in traditional Kanuri society. This
177 is a group of NA appointees including the Primary School Head-
554 master and the three school teachers, the Agricultural expert,
the Veterinary, the Hides and Skins Inspector, the Forestry
expert, the Local Government Advisor, the Adult Education Organ-
[191] izer, the Dispenser, and the Sanitation Inspector. All of these
[871] individuals have been educated in Western schools, most through
[863] secondary school, and all speak some English. They have all
received specialized training for their jobs. In addition,
all are young men or young adult men. Because they have all
been educated, they are addressed as "Malam," an extension of
the term for a Koranic scholar to new areas of scholarship.
(They will be referred to henceforth as "NA Malams".)

634 Despite the fact that the use of the term Malam indicates
177 a general recognition of their scholarly attainments, the NA
554 Malams are a part of the political system, under the jurisdic-
565 tion of the Ajia. Most of the NA Malams in Geidam are sons of
871 Lowans or Ajias, or have some direct connection with the house-
hold of a Lowan or Ajia. This is because the aristocracy and
those in political power have been more likely to send their
[829] sons to school than the talaka. Talaka are loath to send
their children to the Western school as they are needed at
home to assist in farming, and because parents see nothing to
[555] be gained by sending one's child to the school. Lowans, how-
ever, are themselves pressured to set a good example, and they

634 871 555 177 565 554 see that, in order to succeed politically in future years, a school education is an advantage since the youngster learns to speak English, and learns enough of the ways of the Englishman to better himself. Thus the group of NA Malams that has emerged derives from the aristocracy or from minor political officialdom. Their goals are commensurate with their social background; all hope some day to be appointed Lowan or Ajia, or to achieve political power by gaining a post in Maiduguri. As a group, therefore, they belong within the political structure, though their roles are not specifically political. Their aspirations are the traditional Kanuri aspirations toward political power and social prestige. However, the means to obtain power which [178] is represented by the NA Malams is newly emergent in Kanuri society.

E. Religion at the Communal Level.

128 76 Religious practice among the Kanuri does not differ from [179] community to community. Therefore, in discussing the manifestations of religion in the community of Geidam, it will not be necessary to describe Islamic observances, such as the ritual 128 79 prayer. The present discussion will be limited to two areas: [181] religious specialists and their place in the social system of Geidam; and religious festivals as they are celebrated at the community level.

a religious role, but it receives political recognition. There are two Limans in Geidam. One Liman leads prayers on religious holidays, and is called Liman Ngumeribe (ngumeri means religious festival); the other leads the communal Friday prayers and is called Liman Zemabe (Zema means Friday). The Liman Ngumeribe conducts prayers twice each year, at the two most important festivals. When Yerima Mustapha became Ajia of Geidam, he instituted the practice of public communal prayers on the dandal each Friday. This is frequently--though not always--done in Kanuri towns, and had not been the customary practice in Geidam when Kaigama had been Ajia. Yerima made inquiries as to who was considered the most respected Malam in Geidam, and appointed that Malam as the Liman Zemabe of Geidam. The new Liman Zemabe was given a kulugu and a burnoose as marks of office. Though the Liman Ngumeribe had previously held his office under Kaigama, Yerima also gave him a kulugu and a burnoose when he came to Geidam.

2. Religious Festivals.

The month of Ramadan (April 2 to May 1, in 1957) is spent in fasting. During that time neither food nor water is taken into the mouth from sunrise to sunset. All Kanuri above the age of fifteen or sixteen keep the fast. For several years before that boys and girls keep a modified fast, in which three days of fasting are followed by nine days in which the fast is not observed. In Geidam all Kanuri outwardly keep the fast, al-

In particular, if they marry a zogor they are
586 less likely to have children than if they marry a kalə yaskə.
164 This probably accounts for the high birth rate among the Ko-
163 ranic Malams (one has eight children; one has five); they
[342] have all married kalə yaskəs, so that neither they or their
[565] wives are likely to be infected. On the other hand, in the
[463] lower categories (kabuna, craftsmen, talaka) a majority of
[634] the individuals have had no children at all. Seven of the eight talaka have no living children. This is the group with the highest divorce rate, and when they remarry they invariably marry zogors (see Table VIII) so that the chances are high that either husband or wife will be infected and sterile.

597 Table XIb reveals that eight of the 57 children who sur-
842 vived were given away, and grew up in the household of another
602 family. At first, this seems difficult to reconcile with the great love for children and desire to have children. However, those who have borne a child have indicated their ability to bear others. Children are frequently given to relatives who have no children of their own, and who are probably unable to bear children but want a child badly. It may be seen that children are given away to siblings of the parent, to the child's grandparent, or to the chibuna after whom the child has been named. Six of the eight were given immediately after the child was weaned; two were given away at later ages. Giving of children at later ages is related to frequent divorce. Since the child belongs to the father, he may send the child to his mother or father should he, the father, not have an adequate home at the time.

have an adequate home at the time.

634 351 592 Figure 4 presents a diagram of the compound of Yerima Mustapha, whose enormous household is not included in Table XII. Yerima's compound is the size of a city block (79 yards by 160 yards), and is surrounded by mud walls which are ten feet tall. The shaded sections to the rear make up the women's area, and within can be seen the zəgəsə of his wife (Haja Fati), and those of his chirs. (One chir left Yerima's household, so that six house areas appear in the diagram though Yerima has only five chirs.) The sole entrance into the women's area is through Yerima's personal quarters. The house areas of three additional nuclear families can be seen in the diagram. These are slave families, who raise their children within Yerima's household. Several store houses are present, as well as a large inner courtyard in which six or seven of Yerima's horses are kept. Other houses provide living quarters for the numerous slaves, tata njima, and retainers (walidi) who comprise the bulk of the household. Alongside the entrance (chinna) and facing the dandal is a row of official offices which are in fact an integral part of the Ajari.

592 565 554 463 The principles of household affiliation have been described in the previous chapter. In Table XII the actual composition of forty-three households is presented. In each row are found the various individuals who comprise a single household. Thus the four first rows represent the category of the aristocracy in the sample. (As noted the household

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 213]

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 · MS14 Kanuri MS14

592
• 634
351

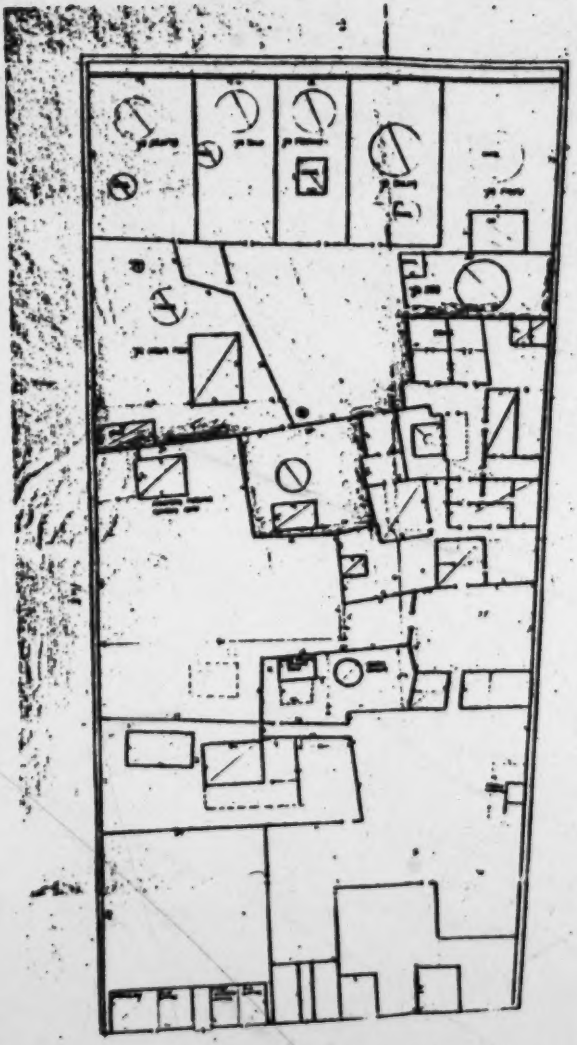


Figure 4 - Diagram of the compound of Yerima Mustapha.

56
177
[554] prestige, and the distinction between slave and free-born.

The direct influence of the British colonial administration has removed the legal support behind the master-slave relationship, so that slaves can no longer be bought and sold, and slaves who have run away cannot be forcibly returned to their masters by the police. This has radically altered the relation between master and slave, so that the distinction between slave and free-born is significant only in special cases.

64
177
178
565 By and large, the colonial administration, because of its policy of indirect rule, has allowed political power to remain in the hands of the same segments of the society as previously held power. However, some changes have been made by the British, so that representatives are elected to a Northern House of Assembly and to a Federal Legislature. In Geidam, political power is largely in the hands of the Ajia, who typifies the aristocracy. Yerima Mustapha as Ajia of Geidam is a perfect example of the aristocrat who has skillfully adapted to the changes demanded of a present-day Ajia, and at the same time has succeeded in perpetuating the old social order. Other positions of power such as those of the Lowans, are held by men faithful to him, chosen from his kabuna, another traditional group which has continued on into the present in Geidam. The position of Alkali in Geidam is held by still another member of the aristocracy; and what is more, the Alkali of Geidam, Alkali Baba Kura, was elected representative to the

634
177
178
565

[648]

[GEIDAM]

634 Northern House of Assembly. An elected office created by the
177 British which is an important new source of power has been
178 successfully captured by a member of the old aristocracy which
565 previously held all political power. Other new offices cre-
[648] ated by the colonial administration are to be found in the
634 District and Town Councils. Thus far, the District and Town
632 Councils in Geidam are dominated by the Ajia. But the member-
177 ship of the Town Council in particular is largely composed of
178 wealthy traders and a few craftsmen, who are all talaka. These
565 talaka do not yet have real political power but they have more
665 symbolic power than talaka have ever had before, and their po-
648 sitions may in time give them real power. The same is also
true for the officers of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC)
in Geidam, who are also talaka and controlled by the Ajia, but
who may in time emerge with real power through their positions
within the dominant political party in Bornu and in Northern
Nigeria. As yet, rival political parties in the North, the
Northern Elements Peoples Union (NEPU) and the Bornu Youth
Movement (BYM), have been effective only in large cities like
Maiduguri. They have made little impression in Geidam.

439 Perhaps the greatest changes in community structure have
177 been those brought about by influences of the Industrial West
433 on trade, particularly on external trade. Though trade has
always been important in Kanuri culture and middlemen in trade
have always existed as specialists in Kanuri cities, it is
probable that a larger proportion of the total economy is de-

124 structure as described in the closing section of the previous chapter.

They are as follows:

124 565 463 1. Aristocracy - a small social group, functioning largely within the area of political organization. Five members of this group were chosen for study.

[792] 2. Koranic Malams - a social category, functioning largely within the area of religion. Some internal structuring occurs within this category. Three members were chosen for study.

[941] 3. Canteen Traders - a social category, functioning largely within the area of economics. Six members of this category were chosen for study.

[634] 4. NA Malams - a social category, but since it is small in size and because its members, having much in common, tend to interact, it has certain group characteristics. It functions largely in the area of political organization. Six members of this category were chosen for study.

[634] 5. Kabuna - a social group functioning largely within the area of political organization. Six members of this group were chosen for study.

5. Craftsmen - a large social category, encompassing many types of craft specialists who form groups within the general category. The craftsmen function largely in the area of economics. Six members were chosen for study.

7. Talaka - an extremely large and heterogeneous social cate-

Table XIII

List of Individuals Making up the Sample

115	1. Aristocracy: (6)	Yerima Mustapha-	Ajia of Geidam.
565		Lowan Ashek-	A Lowan of Geidam.
463		Lowan Kagu-	A former Lowan of Geidam.
551		Malam Jalo-	An NA appointee in charge of the ferry; had been offered a Lowanship but refused it.
124		Sidi Momon-	Nephew of Yerima; an NA Messenger.
[792]	2. Koranic Malams: (3)	Liman Bashir-	Liman Zomabe of Geidam (leads Friday prayers).
		Liman Habib-	Liman Ngumaribe of Geidam (leads prayers on religious holidays).
		Malam Baba Gonyi-	a Malam attached to Yerima's household.
[441]	3. Canteen Traders: (6)	Alhaji Malam Modu Karabima-	a dealer in hides and skins who buys for a European trading company.
		Malam Momon Gordo-	operator of a canteen dealing in cloth.
		Alhaji Amadu Kolon-	operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.
		Alhaji Abacha Modu-	operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.
		Alhaji Bukar Dan Alkali-	a dealer in kola nuts and cattle.
		Alhaji Shetima-	operator of a canteen, and a dealer in groundnuts.
[634]	4. NA Malams: (6)	Malam Ali Mandara-	Chief Scribe of Geidam.
		Malam Bulama-	Treasurer of Geidam.
		Malam Kasem-	Veterinary official.
		Malam Maidugu-	Head-master of the primary school in Geidam.
		Malam Ali Malami-	Dispenser.
		Malam Bulama-	Agricultural expert.

Table XIII (continued)

115 565 463 551 124 [634]	5. Kabuna: (6)	Wakil Guloma-	one of the important kabuna.
		Bukar Gubio-	a minor kabuna.
		Grema Momon-	a young kabuna of intermediary rank.
		Wakil Ali Geje-	Yerima's assistant; head of all the kabuna.
		Bukar Bultuawu-	a minor kabuna.
		Kəngədi-	one of the important kabuna.
	6. Craftsmen: (6)	Malam Chiari Katima-	a house builder and repairer.
		Kazela Modu Katima-	a house builder and repairer.
		Mastapha Alima-	a dyer.
		Malam Modu Kəlidama-	a leather-worker.
		Modu Kəlidama (the younger)-	a leather-worker.
		Bukar Wanzama-	a barber.
	7. Talaka: (8)	Adamu-	a taborma who sells in the market-place.
		Momadu Fərashəma-	a sewer of horse-blankets sold in the market-place.
		Malam Shani-	a laborer who works for one of the European trading companies.
		Malam Gumbo-	a seller of gowns in the market-place.
		Tijani-	a fətkema who sells in the market-place.
		Ali Goroma-	a retail seller of kola nuts in the market-place.
		Lowan Limami-	a low level retainer of the Ajia's who does not have a horse.
		Baba Mainta-	a dealer in almost anything for a commission.

[GEIDAM]

*177 441 Western material goods (Items 6-9) and unacculturated in their choice of occupations and in the aspirations for their sons (Items 35, 36). They speak Hausa, but not other languages, and they cannot write in English script. They possess material goods, and their responses concerning the bicycle (Items 11, 14, 15) are acculturated, but they are at the mid-point when it comes to telling time. Furthermore, their statements concerning the usefulness of a wrist watch are in the unacculturated direction. They would wear shoes (acculturated) but would not wear trousers (unacculturated). They fast, but do not wear charms. They would visit the doctor and prefer European medicine to drinking the ink of the Koran, yet respond that Kanuri treatment is better for 5 of the 6 diseases. They would send their son to school, yet prefer the Koranic Malam to the school. They would marry a Hausa woman, but not any of the other three tribes. Lastly, they would marry an educated woman, but are extremely conservative and would not let her work.

All of their responses are intelligible when one looks at their roles. Yet the pattern of their responses is indicative of an unstable group, more so than any of the other seven groups.

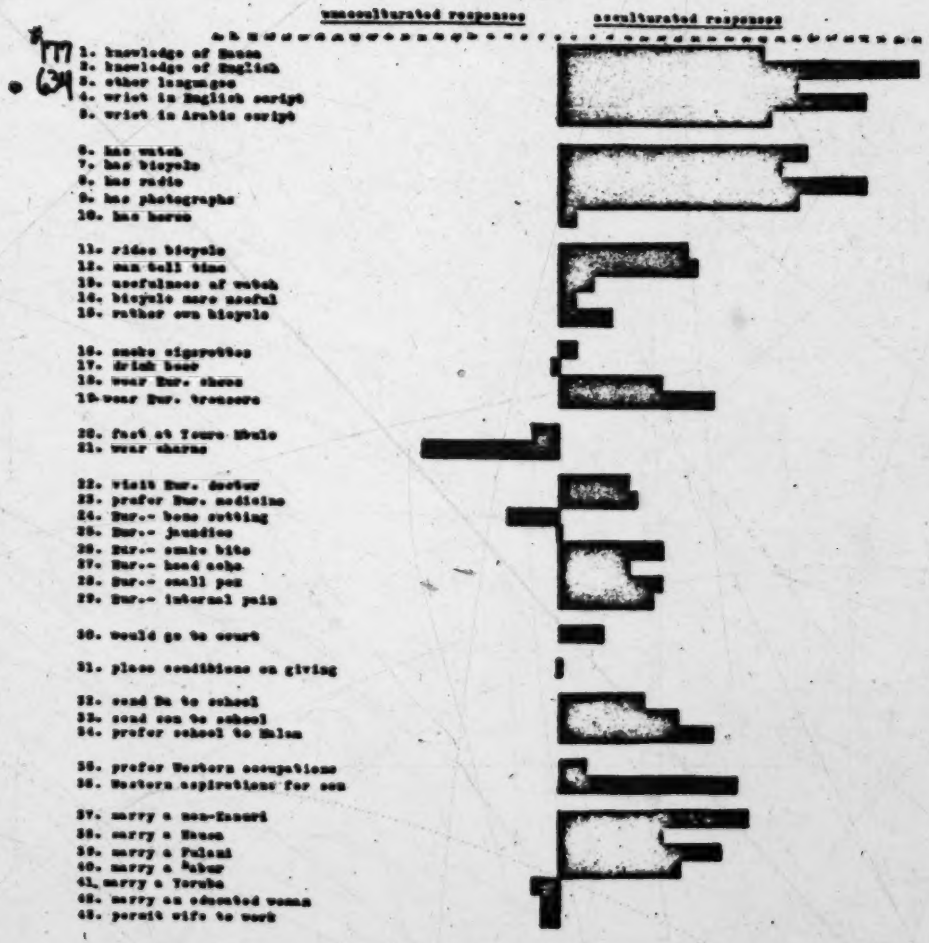
*177 • 634 4. NA Malams. The NA Malams come closest to being a group all of whose responses fall in the acculturated category. Their responses are heavily in the acculturated direction in the areas of language and writing and in the area of possession

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 348]

GEIDAN

Table XLIII

ACCULTURATION PROFILE OF THE BA BILAMO



#177 • 634 of Western material goods. But even the group of NA Malams reveals certain behavioral areas in which it is not very acculturated, in which in fact it is slightly unacculturated. These are the areas of religious behavior generally, drinking beer (17), fasting (20), and wearing charms (21). With respect to the latter item they are quite unacculturated. They are also somewhat more hesitant about marrying an educated woman (42) and permitting her to work. (43). The tendency is not very pronounced for these two items, but the direction is interesting for such an acculturated group. On the whole they are a consistent and a stable group.

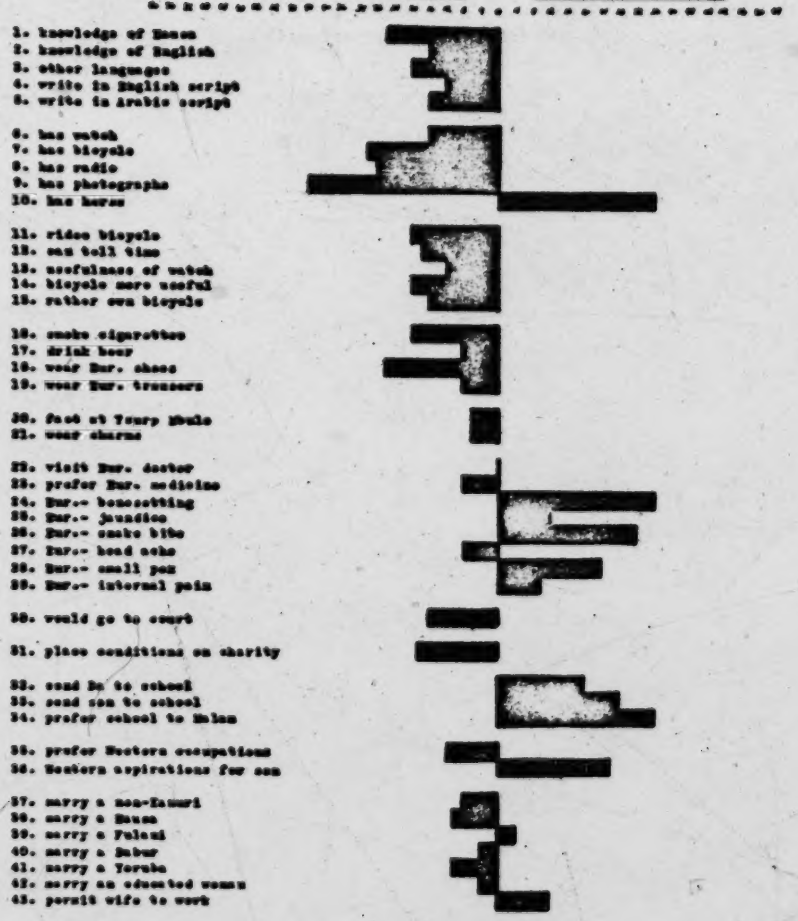
5. Kabuna. The Kabuna are generally an unacculturated group. Their responses are predominantly in the unacculturated direction, though none (except perhaps Item 9) are extreme. Once again, Item 10 is not to be taken as a measure of acculturation. In two behavioral areas their answers are in the acculturated direction, but within these areas they are on the whole consistent in their responses. For five of the six diseases presented (Items 24-29) they favor European treatment, though they do state a preference for drinking the ink of Koranic verses to European medicine (Item 23). The other area in which they show themselves to be acculturated is that of education, and here they are entirely consistent. They prefer Western schools for both son and daughter (Items 32, 33) and prefer school to the Koranic Malam (Item 34). Furthermore, their aspirations for their sons (36) are also acculturated,

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 350]

2:Rosman E-5 (1956-1957) 1966 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Table XLIV

ACCULTURATION PROFILE OF THE KANURI



*177
• 634

177 consistent with their desire to educate their children in West-
634 ern schools.

Since the group of Kabuna are a part of the political organization, they are able to realize the advantages of certain behavioral alternatives introduced by contact. Though they themselves do not interact with agents of Western culture, and are consequently not a very acculturated group, they show a degree of acculturation in their attitudes towards Western medicine and education. Their own aspirations are traditional but they favor Western education for their children, presumably because Western education is a factor in present day political advancement, and they favor Western aspirations for their sons. They appear to be a stable group according to the proposed criteria.

177 6. Craftsmen. The Craftsmen are the most consistently un-
463 acculturated group of the eight. Though their responses do not indicate extreme degrees of conservatism, they are remarkably consistent in their choice of unacculturated responses. They are less likely to fast than other groups (Item 20), and they state that they would visit a European doctor (Item 22), though they prefer Kanuri treatment to European treatment for 4 of the 6 diseases. They are close to the mid-point for all three items dealing with education (Items 32-34), and themselves show a very slight preference for Western occupations (35) though their aspirations for their sons are strongly in the direction of traditional Kanuri occupations (36). They are slightly more per-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 352]

121 *177 veal areas in which they are unacculturated; the most unacculturated groups similarly reveal areas of behavior in which they are acculturated. That these differences in degree of acculturation are determined by the relation of a given group or category to that area of behavior, as is stated in the second sentence of hypothesis 2, is readily apparent from the data. Explanations of these differences in the above discussion have repeatedly sought to relate them to the roles of the group concerned. If these explanations have been convincing, then hypothesis 2 may be said to have been upheld.

It is somewhat more difficult to discuss the implications of the data which have been presented above for hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 states that groups and categories which have become acculturated in certain areas will show strong tendencies to reaffirm strict behavioral norms in other areas. The position of a group within the existing social structure plays an important part not only in determining the areas in which acculturation is likely to occur but also in determining those behavioral areas in which acculturation would not be expected to occur--i.e., those areas in which the group reaffirms traditional behavioral norms.

This may be illustrated by selecting three of the groups whose profiles have been presented in the previous chapter for comparison. The three groups are the following:

a) NA Malams - acculturated and stable.
b) Canteen Operators - intermediary in acculturation and unstable.
c) Craftsmen - unacculturated and stable.

*177 • 634 156 The NA Malams are the most acculturated group of the eight which have been described. How would one account for the fact that

[GEIDAM]

*177
634
156
554

they are such a stable group then? The role of the NA Malam is clearly defined. His Western education is generally acknowledged as a useful thing and he is accorded prestige by being called "Malam". The goals of the NA Malams are traditional Kanuri goals. This is brought home most strikingly in their choice of occupations (Table XXXIII) where four of the six NA Malams chose "Lowan." Their education, their knowledge of the English language, their general high degree of acculturation have not hindered them from attaining positions of political power, a very traditional goal in Kanuri society. On the contrary, these things have become assets. The acculturated individual is at an advantage over the unacculturated individual in rapidly rising within the political system. This state of things will remain at its present level only so long as: (a) the number of NA Malams does not rapidly increase so that many individuals are competing for a limited number of political positions, which would mean that a group of disgruntled and disappointed individuals would be created, and, (b) their degree of acculturation does not reach the point where their goals, too, will change. At present, in the community of Geidam, neither of the latter conditions have arisen. It can also be seen from their acculturation profile that the NA Malams adhere to important Kanuri values in other areas. They do not smoke or drink beer; they fast and wear many charms; they are not reluctant to give gifts of charity; and they would tend to avoid marrying an educated woman or let her work. All

*177 of these indicate that the NA Malams have not rejected important Kanuri values in the course of their acculturation. Though they are a very acculturated group, they are in no danger of drifting away from Kanuri culture and becoming deviants. Consequently they are a stable group, with clearly defined roles and mutually understood expectations and obligations. Other Kanuri can understand the NA Malam, and the NA Malam himself realizes the "self" that he wishes to convey without having to affirm his Kanuri identity through exaggerated behavior.

*177 The Craftsmen represent the opposite extreme of an unacculturated and stable group. Their primary role requires highly skilled and specialized behavior of them and their status is respected in the community. Although their activities are primarily within the economic area, the range of individuals with whom they interact is narrow and they have little or no direct contact with agents of Western society. Their knowledge of languages and of writing is slight. They have few Western goods, nor do they know much about these items. They are not very strict about fasting and drinking beer, but in other areas they adhere strongly to Kanuri values, such as taking disputes for arbitration and giving gifts of charity. They show a slight inclination to favor European doctors, and they favor Western occupations though their aspirations for their sons are strongly traditional. They are not very conservative about education generally. The overall picture of the Craftsmen is of a group that is obviously not very acculturated, but their responses,

792
• 634
441

[For responses of Koranic malams, canteen operators, NA malams and kabunas to questionnaires on acculturation, see charts in category 116, pp. 249-327.]

101
103 The locality within the Emirate in which concentrated field work has been carried out is Magumeri situated about thirty-five miles northwest of Maiduguri on a motor road. Magumeri is the name of
162 both the district and its capital town. The area has a much higher
• 634 proportion of Kanuri than the Emirate in general. In Magumeri district ninety-six per cent of the population are Kanuri while this is true of only sixty-two per cent in the Emirate as a whole.

162 The district contains 52,000 people (1952) and has an area
634 of approximately four hundred square miles. Within its boundaries
632 there are sixteen village area units including the Magumeri village area. This village area has a population of 4,200 of which roughly 2,000 live in the village proper and 2,200 live in hamlets within the village area.

When compared to other rural district capitals in the Emirate, Magumeri village area is slightly smaller than the average. Excluding the two large cities of Nguru and Maiduguri, the population range for district capitals varies from 1,400 to 11,000, and the average is 5,100 persons. Seven district capitals are smaller and eleven are
[166] larger than Magumeri village area. It is reported by long term residents to have been a much larger village at one time but to have been losing population steadily over the past twenty years to Maiduguri.

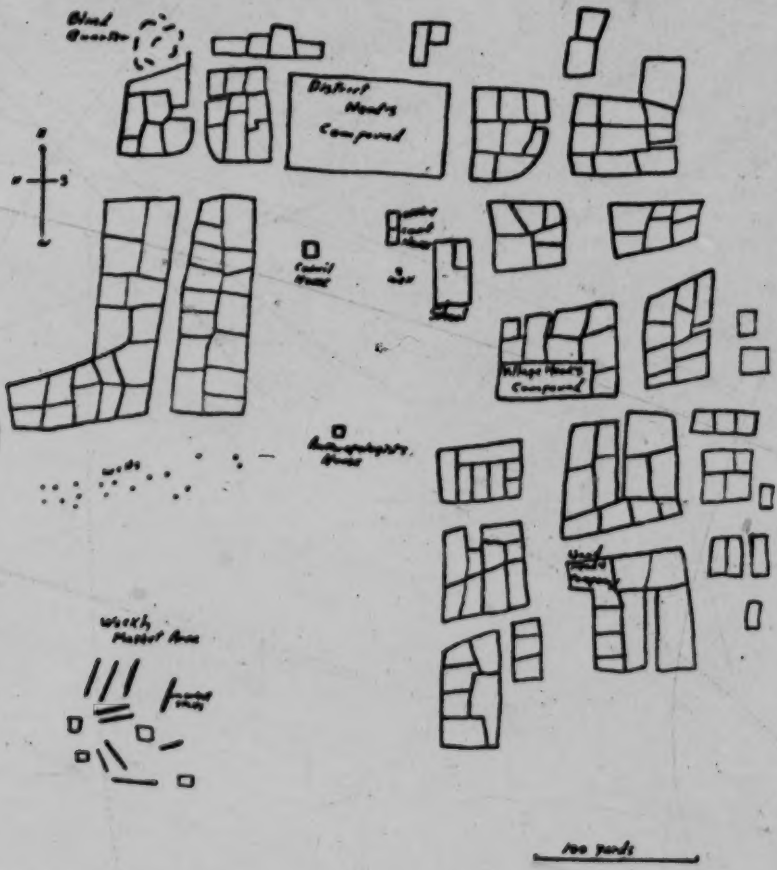
361
621 Like all other Kanuri settlements, Magumeri is built in a U shape around a central plaza (dandal) open at the west end with the house of the highest ranking person at the east end facing west. Lesser political leaders in the village have their own smaller plazas, again
366 with their houses at the east end facing west. Another feature common to all Kanuri settlements is the placing of the butcher's section at the southwest side of a town or market so that the prevailing winds from
088 the northeast carry the odour away. Like other district capitals,

463
554
565
• 634

[For information on acculturation among varied occupational groups (craftsmen, canteen operators, Koranic malams, NA malams and kabuna) and social groups (aristocracy, talaka and low-status individuals), and their responses to contact with material items of Western culture as well as Western medicine, education, language and occupations, see category 116, pp. 249-327.]

634 [621] [368] Like other district capitals, Magumeri's highest ranking person is the District Head. As a district capital it also contains a Junior Primary School, a court house, an infrequently used District Council House, and a district office in which the tax records are kept by a Chief Scribe. These features are shown in the diagram below.

361 368 Diagram Map of Magumeri Village



175 631 nobleman); and the west by the Yerima (a nobleman). As far as can be ascertained these men were not enfieffed of these portions of the kingdom (they held fiefs elsewhere), but were rather hereditary titles connected with military functions in one of the quarters of the state, or in the army as a whole. Thus the Mustrema was responsible for controlling raids upon the northern area of the realm, and was in charge of northern troops when the army of the kingdom was assembled for war. In contrast, Nguru, in the northwest, was held by the Galidima who still holds it today. The latter, unlike the other "subregents", but like the tributary vassals, resided in his territory as a kind of semi-independent king although he was also one of the paramount courtiers of the Bornu ruler. All other nobles lived at the capital under the watchful eye of their king, and toured their districts 175 631 only when trouble was brewing or taxes were needed. Working within the • 634 above system was the organization of the state into fiefdoms held by the nobility, rewarded servants of the king, and military personnel. Any person to whom a fief was given or who received it through inheritance from an original recipient (which was more often the case) was called the Chima Kura. As was pointed out, all nobles with the exception of the Galidima lived at the capital, and the administration of the fief was carried on by a Chima Gana (small Chima) who was most often a slave or trusted servant of the Chima Kura. The Chima Gana usually resided in the fief itself raising taxes and maintaining law and order. With this system it was easy to gear in vassal states or nomad peoples. Their leaders were simply made Chima Kura of the Kanuri state, which strengthened the leader's position in his own group after conquest, and manoeuvred him into the Kanuri political organization.(1) Local traditions are fairly unanimous in attributing contin-

(1) This office because of its different nature was also referred to as the Kura Jilibe (head of the tribe or clan). The Kura Jilibe was however acting as the Chima Kura of his group, in relation to the Bornu throne.

175
631
[173]

Local traditions are fairly unanimous in attributing continuity to this system of fiefdoms when the dynastic power changed hands at the beginning of the 19th century. Gradually the state began to be organised as it was of old, before the Fulani attacks, although now the fiefs were distributed amongst the family, courtiers, slaves and eunuchs of the Shehu.

175
631
642

An early British report in Bornu indicates some of the dynamic qualities of the fief system as it operated in pre-British Bornu.(1) Tomlinson found that from 1893 to 1900 Rabeh had reduced the number of fiefs and for the most part placed them under his major lieutenants.(2) Being a stranger in a new land Rabeh had to keep his control as tight as possible and rely on a few trusted followers. Therefore the number of fiefs were reduced. Alternatively, when the Shehu was re-instated by the British and asked to help create "Districts" out of the old fiefs, he attempted to make as many of them as he could in order to obtain as large a body of followers as possible to consolidate his power.

173
634
[562]

Although there is no mention made in any of the sources on Bornu, Kanuri informants claimed that the Chima Kura had the right to sell a fief if he so desired. Titled women were also given fiefs which were, as in the case of a male fiefholder, managed for them by slaves or servants in residence at the fief.

173
651

The pre-British taxation system is remembered as consisting of two separate levies. One, the binèmram collected in binèm (winter) was the property and organizational responsibility of the Chima Kura who owned the fief. Taxes were collected in kind at the local peasant level. The

(1) Tomlinson, F.J.P. Report of Mgansei District; 1918, in Prov. Office Maiduguri, Bornu, Prov. Nigeria.

(2) In a few cases, when the old Kanuri fiefholders declared allegiance to Rabeh, they were allowed to retain their fiefs. This occurred in the case of the fief of Magumeri in the 1890's.

173
651 Chima Kura sent out a messenger from the capital to his representative in the fief, the Chima Gana, instructing him of the total demand of the levy. The messenger and the Chima Gana then raised the tax levy in the fief and extracted a surplus for their pains.

Part of this tax was given to the Shehu by the Chima Kura as sada'a (tithe). However, we are told that another tax was levied (also called the sada'a) which was specifically a royal revenue. Opinion differs as to the organization of the levy. Some sources tell of the king selling collection rights to trusted courtiers, while others refer to this tax as a special harvest tithe collected by the fief-holder and his representatives, partly for himself and partly for the king.

173
634 Within his holdings a fief-holder might use some of the area
[651] for his own purposes. For example, he might settle some of his slaves in a village and a large portion of the produce would come to him as his
[792] rightful property. Or again, the fief-holder might give a segment of his holding to a mallam or a group of mallams (religious teachers and practioners) so that they might have land to farm and support themselves.
[103] Very often such a settlement would be mahram, i.e. tax exempt. These areas
[621] can still be noted in Bornu today in the names of villages. A village called Karliyari, or slave town is the present site of one of the old slave settlements in a fief, while the name Mallamari for a town refers to its past history as a town of mallams or holy men.

175
631
651 In the case of the vassal states which were subdued in war, a portion of the tithes collected by the local chief would always be sent off as tribute to the ruler of Bornu. To insure that this practice was carried out, the Bornu monarch often placed a servant or a slave (never a relative) in the capital of the vassal state. When Richardson reached Zinder in the 1850's, he found an Arab of Tripoli who had travelled widely

175
648
643 Data on how this was accomplished were not available in the public records of Bornu province. Therefore it can only be assumed (provisionally, until more information becomes available) that the British promise to rebuild Kuka, the old 19th century capital, must have appealed to the Shehu, and/or the French conceded to British demands for the Shehu to be brought to Bornu. Certainly since Britain had claim to Bornu as part of Nigeria from the days of the Chartered Companies (late 19th century), and was making good the claim, it was only logical from their viewpoint that the traditional ruler of Bornu should be allowed to sit on the throne
175
648 in the area historically connected with his reign. Taking the evidence of the French defeat of Rabeh, and their entry into Bornu with an armed force to defeat and kill his son, plus their establishment of the Shehu, it would seem as if the French from east of Lake Chad were trying to limit British expansion into Bornu by a fait accompli of possession, even though the western Chad basin had been ceded to England in the councils of European diplomacy.(1) In any event, all this manoeuvring on the part of the French proved of no avail, for it had also been decided in Europe that the Cameroons were to be administered by Germany, and the French soon had to cede even the area south of Lake Chad to that country.

175
648
634 "The first important step by the new British overlords was the sending out of the fiefholders to live in their fief-ships in 1903 ... These fiefs afterwards evolved into Districts and the most suitable men available were put in charge of them, the Shehu always being consulted
[631] in the selection. These men are now Ajia or District Headmen. This formed a chain of responsibility in the administration which the size of the Emirate and its small European staff immediately demanded."(2) However

(1) Langer, W.L. The Diplomacy of Imperialism,(New York) p. 131
(2) Annual Report 1909; op. cit.

175
648 before the fiefs developed into Districts it was discovered that a divi-
• 634 sion of interests was involved between the British authorities and the
643 Shehu. The British were motivated by their own ideas of administration, i.e. to form "a chain of responsibility" from the local level up through the Shehu to the Resident, while the Shehu evidently tried to have as many fiefs created as possible in order that there would be a multitude of District Heads, thereby increasing the number of offices with which he could reward his supporters. The matter was settled by the British who limited the number of districts to a compromise between what they believed to be the traditional structure, and what they considered to be a workable arrangement in terms of their own requirements of administering the Emirate.

175
648 When the District Head arrived in his District with his retinue
634 of supporters he found that the local Village Headmen (the Lawan), who
632 were strange to him, were being supported by the British because of their hereditary claims to village leadership. The British soon discovered that it had been the policy of the traditional fief-holder "to supplant the hereditary headmen by slaves (or followers) of the Chiaa."(1) Nevertheless, when a new fief-holder took office they conducted investigations to find who were the pre-British (and usually pre-Rabeh) Village Headmen and proceeded to appoint these people as Village Heads. In following this policy a political structure was created which utilized two potentially conflicting principles of social organization. In appointing District Heads the personal relationships of upper class leaders to the Shehu was considered to be the acceptable criteria, while the hereditary claims of local leaders were considered to be the basis for Village Headships. Thus,

(1) Patterson, J.R. Report on Magumeri District 1920; in Magumeri District Notebook; Provincial Office, Maiduguri, Bornu Prov. Nigeria.

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 M514 Kanuri M514

175 648 634 632 the new District Head going out to his district was confronted with a situation in which he had a territory comprising a group of villages which were to be under his organized administration, and which were at the same time headed by people with whom he had no personal relationships.

Entering into this situation, the District Head responded in several ways. He could try to win the loyalty of the local Village Heads to himself, or conversely some Village Heads, sensing danger in the new situation, might come to the District Head and ask to be "his man." This meant that the District Head had expanded his following to include the Village Head. However, there were obstacles to this simple method of rapprochement. If the Village Head already had a strong functioning relationship to some other "big man" in the Kanuri state who was a powerful person in the post-1900 organization, or if the District Head was anxious to reward his own supporters with lucrative and prestige giving roles, 175 then this method was not too successful. The District Head could also 648 try to manipulate the situation so that the Village Heads who he found 634 the most truculent in accepting his overlordship, were regarded as inef- 632 ficient, corrupt, or immoral in the eyes of the British, so that they 661 would be deposed and then he could replace them with recruits from among his own following. Thus, in 1919, a British District Officer (D.O.) visiting Magumeri District, was told by Abba Kiari, then District Head of Magumeri, that two of the Village Heads in his District were inefficient and should be deposed. He felt also that because of the proximity of the two towns they should be united under one Village Head, and he offered one of his own followers as the logical candidate for the new appointment.(1) Finally, the District Head could simply carry on as if the British were

(1) Whitely: Report on Magumeri 1919; in Magumeri District Notebook

175
648 not present and appoint chima gana to live in each village of the Dis-
634 trict, who would collect taxes, levy fines, and hold judicial hearings,
632
661 i.e. act as Village Headmen even though incumbents for these roles had already been appointed by the British. This led to an order by the Resident of Bornu in 1910 to the effect that no District Head could station his men in any of the towns of his District with the exception of his own headquarters. However, the provincial records indicate that the chima problem plagued the administration right up until the 1930's.

175
648 Besides the structural difficulties which resulted in the
651 political organization from the colonial contact, a major functional prob-
631 lem emerged in the area of taxation. By 1904 a tax collection system based on assessments made from rough estimates was instituted. Each village was assessed as a whole and the money turned into the Government (at first the Resident, later the Native Authority Treasury) through the District Head of each district. However, the Kanuri pre-British concept of taxation persisted long after British attempts to introduce their own concepts. The British attempted to introduce the idea that the District Head and the Village Heads under him were political functionaries or agents whose task it was to collect taxes, and not levy them as well.

[178] Although well known, this idea has not really ever been transferred from British culture to Kanuri ideas on tax collection and, as we shall see, what amounts to tax levies by local officials in excess of government requirements is almost a universal practice in Bornu today.

[166] The British soon found that "extortion" was being used to collect taxes. Discoveries were made by touring D.O.'s of peasants who would complain of excess taxation, or Village Heads whose prerogatives were being usurped by a chima, or in extreme cases by the emigration of peasants

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175
177
648

schools, a few more roads were built or improved and once in a while extended, local European trading Companies reported "steady progress" in business volume, living conditions in the province for European staff "steadily improved", medical facilities "steadily expanded" and so on. Certainly there always seemed to be a rather high turn over in chiefs, but this came to be part of the expected regularity of life in Bornu.

What in effect had occurred was an adjustment. The British administration had set up the organisation of its indirect rule and the task of each new Resident Officer in Bornu was to implement Lord Lugard's policies to the best of his abilities. The general methods of resistance to the English administration were well known by both the Kanuri and the English and no jarring outside influence entered the scene to upset the gentlemanly tug-of-war which characterized the colonial contacts as a kind of game in which everyone knew the rules and the conditions of play, while the over-all techniques of the players did not change much through time.

175
648
634
[127]

How the "game" was played at the political level can be seen in the following example of the deposition of a chief, taken from the provincial records at Maiduguri, concerning the District Head of Mobber between 1929 and 1931.(1) Mobber District is in the extreme northeast of Bornu Emirate on the border between Nigeria and French West Africa. Its relative isolation from British surveillance contributed to the maintenance of officially prohibited practices well into the late 1920's.

During 1929, a touring officer (British) reported that

(1) c.f. Mobber District File; Provincial Office, Maiduguri.

175 648 634 632 During 1929, a touring officer (British) reported that there were indications of widespread "extortion" of the peasants of Mobber District by the District Head and his chimas. In May of 1930, Mr. Reed, an A.D.O., was sent up to Mobber to investigate the situation. He reported that the District Head had stationed his chimas in many of the towns of the District. These subalterns were exercising judicial authority, administering whippings and raising levies for themselves and the District Head. The latter when questioned admitted that he was operating through chimas but complained that the Lawans (traditional Village Heads) were for the most part hostile to him. Mr. Reed told the District Head to abolish the chima system and tour himself. The District Head pleaded that he needed to have his own followers in the outer towns of his District to maintain order. The A.D.O. agreed and said he would return in about a month's time to see if the reforms had been carried out. On the return of Mr. Reed in June the situation had not changed appreciably and the A.D.O. arrested five of the most complained against chimas (by the villagers and Village Heads of the "chima's town") and took them to Maiduguri for hearings on the matter.

175 648 634 643 692 On July 7th, 1930, the Shehu, during an interview with the Resident, mentioned that the District Head of Mobber had requested the removal of the Mobber District judge on the grounds of ignorance and inefficiency. Upon questioning, the Shehu advanced the opinion that this request might be due to bad feeling between the District Head and the Alkali (judge). In his turn, the Resident opined that it might more particularly be the case that the judge disapproved of the District Head's illegal use of chimas and raising of personal tax levies.

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 M514 Kanuri M514

175
648
634
643

In another meeting between the Shehu and the Resident later that month, the Mobber matter was brought up again and the Shehu agreed that things did not seem to be going too well in Mobber. On the 14th of August, the Shehu suggested to the Resident when the Mobber misdemeanours were mentioned that the Mobber peasants were an extremely difficult group to manage and possibly chimas might be required for the proper administration of the District. At the end of August the Shehu requested of the Resident that the five men who had been arrested by A.D.O. Reed be sent back to their homes. The Resident agreed in principle, but felt that the one who had beaten a villager should be kept in Maiduguri for a little longer yet. He added that the men could be sent back to their homes only if the Shehu would take full responsibility for any further trouble in the Mobber area.

175
648
634

In September and again in October of 1930, A.D.O. Reed was sent up to check the situation in Mobber District. The chimas were operating as before and the District Head was reported as being "not respectful" to the British officer on tour. Only one change had occurred. An entire village area appeared to have been relinquished by the District Head since one of the Shehu's sons had been appointed its Lawan (Village Head) by the Wazirí.

(632)

Several months later in February 1931, the District Head of Mobber appeared in Maiduguri for an annual meeting and was warned by the Resident that "unless considerable improvement was shown he would be dismissed." From this point on, there were very few items in the Mobber District file in which the "Mobber case" was actually referred to. One short item tells of a rumour picked up by a junior officer to the effect that the District Head of Mobber was a favor-

175
648
634

ite of the Shehu and was married to a daughter of the Wazirl (head of the Shehu's council). By the end of 1931 the matter began to congeal. The D. O. of Bornu Emirate wrote a note to the Resident claiming that the time had come to dispose of the District Head of Mobber since he obviously would not reform, and then suggested several names as replacements. In early 1932 the matter was mentioned briefly in a report to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces from the Resident of Bornu. It stated that "the Shehu and Council have found it necessary to depose the District Head of Mobber." Several people were nominated by the D. O. and by the Council for the replacement and the matter was closed when a man suggested by the Council was mentioned in reports as the new District Head of Mobber.

The British administrators had tried to persuade the District Head of Mobber for two years to stop using his own system of political organization and work through the Village Heads, i.e., the political structure recognized by themselves. His inability to comply finally brought about his removal. But the entire push and pull of the deposition did not materially disturb relations between the British and the political leadership of Bornu.

175
648

[631]

Certainly the case hints at a well-organized Kanuri political system operating independently of the one formally recognized by the British. However, it also illustrates the formalized and balanced relationship which existed between the Resident and the Shehu. The Resident patiently tried to press forward with his own conception of government, while the Shehu was at the same time attempting to mollify English demands in order that the Emirate political organization could be maintained unmolested. The unsettling feature of the relations between the Kanuri and the English

[643]

632 others are of more recent vintage. Dismissal from office is occasioned by (1) the political manoeuvring of the District Head who wishes to replace a Lawan with one of his own followers; (2) migration out of a Village Area or complaints by peasants to the British against their Lawan; (3) failure to raise enough tax, or attempting to raise too much. However, if a Lawan is responsive to his seniors and does not mulct his peasants to the point of hardship, migration, and complaint, he has a fairly secure position in the Bornu political organization.

The District Organization

632 In Bornu the Lawan represents a link between the higher pol-
631 itical organization and the landed peasants. To the latter he is the most easily accessible member of the ruling class, and to many, especially in the hamlets, the exact nature of the political organization above
634 the Lawan is known in only vague outline. However, in terms of the
631 Emirate, the District Head (hereafter written DH) and his administration of the District hold a central position. If there are any disturbances, irregularities in tax revenues, increases in crime, migration out of the District, or failure of any policy goals, it is to the DH that all agencies at the center turn for an explanation.

634 To the lowly peasant the DH is a man in another world, a world of awesome power, riches and courtly life. A Lawan may go abroad to oversee a new well in one of his hamlets, or to mark off the boundaries of a new farm, or take a tax census, but the DH rarely leaves his compound to go out among the people, except to collect the nomad cattle tax, or to appear at the Shehu's court for some state ceremonial.
[492] When he does venture forth, it is a royal sally, to the playing of pipe
[411] and drum, with a troop of galloping horsemen and servants brandishing swords, spears and dane guns (muzzle loaders).

• 634 The District organisation is roughly similar throughout the twenty-one such divisions in Borno Emirate. Each District shares the [368] name of its chief town. This town serves as the District capital and houses the DH and his followers, the District representatives of the N.A., a District court house for the Alkali (District judge), and a [491] Junior Primary School. Today most District capitals are connected to the Emirate capital by motor road. Formally, the DH is responsible for the administration of all village areas within the confines of his District.

634 64 A DH is formally appointed and installed by the Shehu in consultation with his Council and the Colonial officials. Only high ranking men in the state are considered, and in every case but one, all present DH's are the sons of men who held the same rank. In the contemporary scene British ratification means that the choice must be weighted towards a literate English speaker wherever possible. The Shehu must feel that he is obtaining a loyal follower, and must benefit materially from the choice, by gifts in cash and kind from the would-be DH. (This latter action is illegal and unfortunately there is insufficient information for the writer to make a confident descriptive statement about gift giving by would-be office holders). Finally, the Shehu's Council must be won over or at least some of them, so that they will either support the aspirant or split on their opposition to him.

634 [644] The DH's compound is supplied by the N.A. and is the most impressive building in town. Each DH keeps a compound in Maiduguri, in the Shehuri (palace) ward of the city, with a residing Wakil (Chief follower) who appears at the Shehu's Court to represent his superior at the palace. In the District, the DH maintains a large extended household organization of followers and slaves. These live in contiguous and non-

634 571

634 571 contiguous households close to their superior's residence. The organisation has a Wakil as its sub-head who acts as DH on the few occasions when the DH is absent from his District headquarters. The general term for all male members of this extended household organisation is waladai (roughly non-kin follower) or tada Ajiabe (sons or boys [554] of the DH). The waladai, whether slave or freeborn, are also called ko'una if they have been given a horse by the DH which gives them a higher status than the unhorsed members of the organisation. In Magumeri a few of these followers have joined the DH during their own lives, most other freeborn as well as slave, are hereditary followers of this particular DH and his father before him.

Collectively the members of this group are referred to by non-members as tada Ajiabe. When they are older and married with farms (given to them by the DH)(1) and perhaps have some dry season activity, they are at first glance hardly distinguishable from ordinary peasants. However, unlike ordinary peasants, the DH uses them as messengers and helpers in nomad cattle tax levies. They in turn never fail to ride in a gallop in the DH's honour, if they have a horse. Furthermore, they must be ready and willing to move with their leader to a new District should he be stationed elsewhere. Younger members who live either in the DH's compound or with older members of the organization are often feared by respectable townsfolk. They have no farms, no wives, and no households of their own. They talk, play cards, drink, look for amorous experiences, and are felt to be spies for the DH.

634 571 561

[423] [425] (1) Within the available land of the District Headquarters there is an acreage which is under the direct dispensation of the DH and beyond the jurisdiction of the Lawan. The DH may also appropriate farm land for his own use or dispensation beyond the borders of present farming activities in the District capital.

634 571 561 Conversation among peasants suddenly stops when one of these fellows approaches the group.

634 692 The DH's followers are disciplined by the DH rather than the local Lawan. Peasant legal cases usually come before the Lawan for adjudication. But legal cases between peasants and DH's followers are brought to the DH or the District Alkali (Muslim judge) court. The DH disciplines his followers for any high-handed treatment of peasants because such behaviour if continued unchecked can bring action against [681] him from higher up in the state. Thus the DH Magumeri severely and publicly reprimanded his followers for misdemeanours such as assaulting peasants or not repaying debts. One member of the DH's organisation was publicly reprimanded and privately threatened with expulsion from the organization for burning down a pagan's hut because the latter would not give up his wife to the desires of the follower.

634 571 The followers of DH receive money, food, clothes and status in the society as members of a powerful organization. In return they give him the prestige afforded to anyone who has a large retinue of loyal supporters in a culture where such followings are highly valued. [557] Informants often remark that one DH was a "bigger" man than another 634 because he had more followers. They also serve as his executive and 571 carry out his decisions in the District. Thus in Magumeri District, 661 where not many of the people are enthusiastic about western education, the DH uses his followers to abduct children from their parents in order to fill the two classrooms of the District's only school. Another DH known to the writer assesses each Lawan for the amount of taxes he must raise annually with the understanding that there will be enough left over after revenue is delivered to the capital for the DH and the Lawan to have some cash gains. In one case a Lawan of the District claimed

634 571 661 that his assessment was too high. The DH promptly sent out some of his followers and gathered twice the assessment originally stipulated. He then called in the Lawan to the District capital, reprimanded him and gave back one-quarter of the excess tax raised by his followers.

631 Formally the Lawans are subordinate to the DH of their District. The DH relays information to them from the capital concerning the execution of their political duties and it is their responsibility to have these directives carried out. However, for various reasons to be discussed presently, some of the political activity of the DH is illegal under the present regulations. Therefore he often requires more than mere compliance to state regulations. As shown by the example above the DH wants cooperation and complicity in his own political organization of the District. Several factors militate against the absorption of the Lawans into the DH's organization. Firstly, the Lawan's salary and his income from taxes and political duties make him less dependent upon the DH than the latter's more disciplined followers. Secondly, the British have always viewed the Lawan's job as that of a local chief (see above pp.36-39) whose ties should be to the locality and not necessarily the DH. Nevertheless a DH's views are almost always taken into consideration by both the NA and the British when a new Lawan is to be appointed. This last point leads to a conflict. Dismissals and transfers are common occurrences among DH's. Because DH's often manage to get a few of their loyal followers into a Lawan's job, especially in the District capital, each new DH in a District is confronted with a few Lawans who are the loyal followers of his predecessor.

631 661

The result of this structural framework is a constant manoeuvring by the DH to either win the loyalty and obedience of his Lawans or replace them with his own followers.

631
661 Another good example of this point was observed in the field. The DH of Magumeri, Digma, had obtained a Village Area Headship in Damaturu District for his younger (full) brother in 1944, while he was DH of Damaturu District. His younger brother had been extremely high-handed in the administration of his Village Area and was difficult to bring under control. The brother was finally deposed in 1949, after Digma had been sent to another District and a new DH had taken over Damaturu District. When Digma was made DH of Magumeri in 1952, he made no move to install his younger brother as a Village Area Head (Lawan). He told the writer that it was his intention not to do so in the future because his brother was a "bad man" who oppressed his villagers if he got the chance, and such misdemeanors reflected back on himself as the head of
[602] the District. In the politics of Bornu, the "unity of siblings" is tempered by the requirements of office.

The N. A. Officials in the District

634
647 Local representatives of the various branches of the N. A. are stationed in the District Capital. These include (in Magumeri) a District Chief Scribe and his assistants, a veterinary mallam, a hides and skins mallam, an adult education mallam, an agricultural field assistant, the Junior Primary School Headmaster, Arabic teacher, and student teacher, between three and five N. A. Messengers, two to four N. A. policemen, a prison warder, and finally a Muslim Judge (Alkali) for the District court, and his retinue of followers. This list may be expanded or contracted from one District to another, depending upon the number of
[178] civil service branches that are represented in the area. Today the tendency is towards expansion of these services and thus expansion of the personnel stationed out in the "bush." These officials are paid salaries by the N. A. and live in one ward of the District capital (away from the

634 647 Lawan's section), usually near the District Head's ward. They are often shifted from one District to another. Only one of the N. A. employees living in Magumeri in 1956-7 had lived there for more than four years, and almost all of them had lived in at least three towns in the previous ten years. This mobility contributes to their social solidarity. Besides this common experience of mobility, they are for the most part city-bred, or at least city-trained, and form an extension of the urban bureaucracy [571] out in the Districts. Their independent source of income from the civil service, plus their common interests in the city and the state, make them a separate class of cosmopolitans on the rural scene. Thus when asked to name their best friends, these N. A. personnel almost always refer to persons also connected with the N. A.

There is no simple formula to describe the interaction of N. A. officials in the Districts with the DH. In some cases it is similar to the DH/Lawan relationships when the Lawan is a follower of the DH's predecessor in the District. In structural terms this means that the official is not a loyal follower of the DH, but occupies some key position for which 634 the DH needs a disciplined subordinate. This occurs, for example, in the 647 office of District Chief Scribe. This official counts the tax revenues, 651 and prepares the balance sheets from the tax receipt books. Since it is important for the DH to control the amount of tax money collected, and to take some for himself to run his organization, he must be in close collaboration with the Chief Scribe.

634 In Magumeri (until August 1957) the District Chief Scribe 647 was a loyal follower of the ex-DH who had gone to another District. All 661 efforts by the present DH of Magumeri to win the support of the Chief 631 Scribe have failed. Other N. A. officials told the writer that the DH

634
647
661
631
hinted at the inefficiency of the Chief Scribe to a touring British officer in 1957. After this alleged interview with the DH, the British officer stated that in his opinion there was "something going on here" and he suspected the Chief Scribe, because of a "shifty eyed look about him". In August 1957 the Chief Scribe was formally informed by the N.A. that he was being transferred to another District, with the understanding that the move was a reprimand. The DH is not free to manoeuvre someone more loyal to himself into the position of District Chief Scribe.(1)

634
647
571
In many cases the relationship between N.A. officials in the District and the DH is one of respectful but carefully maintained social distance. The N.A. personnel are usually new to the District and generally desire to move ahead in their own civil service departments. In Magumeri, these N.A. personnel are asked to appear and eat [565] with the DH between two and four times a week. This helps validate their upper class membership as a group apart from the rural population.

(1) The total politics of this manoeuvre are more complicated than this simple outline indicates. The British officer was accompanied by a high placed N.A. official from Maiduguri in order to reprimand the DH for not collecting enough taxes. (The N.A. official later sent word by messenger from the capital apologizing for his own severity on the grounds that he could do nothing else in the presence of the British officer. He also warned the DH to increase his tax deliveries in order to avoid future trouble). For a show of efficiency, as well as to save the DH from the direct blame, it is believed by the local officials that the Chief Scribe was chosen as a scapegoat. Whether or not this is true is impossible to know; however, it is clear from his own statements that the British officer was strongly of the opinion that the Chief Scribe was in league with the DH to evict the tax revenue, and that the removal of the Scribe would slow down these efforts by the DH. The high placed N.A. official who knew better did nothing to correct this false impression held by the Englishman. And it was this false impression that led to the Chief Scribe's removal from the District. Whether or not the DH and the N.A. official planted the idea in the Englishman's head, or whether they exploited a suspicion already there, still amounts to the same thing - the removal of the Chief Scribe for a "misdemeanour" he did not commit, in order that it might be committed in the future.

634 647 571 However, this and other moves by the DH to obtain friendship and loyalty from the N.A. employees in his area can never be totally successful in creating a unified political organization in the District. First of all, they can be moved to other Districts by their superiors and often are, thus creating the problem of new N.A. personnel constantly arriving. Secondly, their income from N.A. salaries allows them to be independent of the DH economically if they wish, while the power and authority of their own departmental superiors in the capital always acts to lessen the degree of sensitivity and possible subservience they may feel towards the DH.

631 634 647 This does not mean to imply that the N.A. employees are completely independent of the DH. In many branches of N.A. activity it is either difficult or impossible at present to initiate or continue civil service programs without a modicum of cooperation from the DH. This is another way of saying that in the rural area the independent existence of other sources of power and authority besides the line leading from Lawan through the DH to the Shehu is hardly recognized. (1)

For example, it is impossible to establish a local forest reserve without the DH issuing orders to all Lawans ordering them to cooperate with a newly arrived District representative of the Forestry Department. Or again, it is the DH who at present enforces and maintains a regular flow of children into the Junior Primary School in his District capital. On the other hand, if the DH continually refuses to cooperate with N.A. officials and civil service programs are obstructed, complaints by local N.A. personnel, plus the failure of program goals can bring sharp reprimands down upon the DH.

The DH as a titled sub-ruler under the Shehu still has a

(1) The exception here is the European, who the peasant knows has much power.

The DH as a titled sub-ruler under the Shehu still has a highly respected position in the society, and the N.A. officials are ready and willing to pay respect to his traditional prestige. Thus if the DH (on the rare occasions when he does emerge from his residence) passes by, N.A. officials like everyone else stand up while he moves past them; similarly as a mark of respect they remove their shoes before coming into his presence.

Finally, if the N.A. official is not incorporated into the extended household organization of the DH, then the factional memberships of the DH as compared to that of the official also tend to determine how much pressure the DH is able to exert in the situation. If the DH is closely connected to the Department Heads, and other high ranking N.A. officials, and these latter respect his friendship and judgement, then he may have an avenue of control over the local official through the latter's own superiors. On the other hand, if the N.A. employee is himself connected to powerful factions in the state, then the DH knows that this particular person can bring powerful forces into action against him.

The potential conflict between the DH and the N.A. officials disappears when the latter is part of the DH's extended household organization. In Magumeri, one N.A. Messenger and the N.A. prison warder were followers of the DH. The N.A. Messenger started about twenty years ago in Maiduguri as a seller of cut grass for horse feed. Later he became attached as a servant-follower to an ex-Shehu's son (1) and from there became a horsed follower (ko'una) of the present DH of Magumeri who

(1) Bornu gossip attributes this rather large upward leap to a homosexual relationship between the servant and his master, which the Kanuri believe is one way for a man of no means to move up the social ladder; i.e. by making himself available sexually to a homosexual member of the upper classes.

634 647 554 owes many obligations to this Shehu's son. Later, through his connections to both these men, and their connections in the Emirate, he was appointed to the job of N. A. Messenger assigned to the DH of Magumeri. The DH arranged that this man be used to deliver the N. A. salaries from [661] Maiduguri to Magumeri. Since the salaries are in cash, the Messenger is able to do some quick trading with the money before he brings it back to [203] the District. Because of his constant trips back and forth to and from the capital, plus his many contacts among the nobles and officials of the State, this Messenger has become the DH's listening post for news and gossip from the city. This communication position is vitally important to the DH since he must know of shifts in policy objectives and personnel in the capital in order to guage properly the pressures that may be exerted upon him from the center. The Messenger fulfilling this role has, in his turn, used his position to usurp a leading status among the followers of the DH, many of whom are either hereditary or long-term members of the DH's organization. They feel that he is "pushy" and confidentially accuse him of secret immorality. On the other hand, his fellow N. A. officials in the District maintain only a polite but distant relationship with him; (a) because of his close ties to the DH, and (b) because he always delivers their salaries late, which naturally antagonizes them. The man thus pays a high price of loneliness and semi-isolation for the key position he has carved for himself in the DH's organization.

634 647 662 The prison warder who kept the little jail in Magumeri, although not formally a DH's follower, was well on the way to becoming

634 647 662 one, before he was re-stationed to the capital city by the N.A. He had arrived several years ago in Magumeri as the jail keeper and the DH had given him a place to live within the walls of his own residence. In consequence almost all of the jailer's friendships and social relations were with people of the DH's extended household organization. This created a gap between the jailer and the other N.A. officials who felt that he was not completely trustworthy as a confidential friend, since gossip and criticism of the DH - a common topic of conversation - might be dangerous in his presence. Finally in 1955, the DH gave the jailer a young virgin of his household over whom he had marriage dispensation rights. This tied the relationship much tighter, and had the jailer stayed on in Magumeri, he would have been one of the few N.A. officials whom the DH could count on for subservient behaviour. (1)

The D.H.'s Relations to the Center

631 634 642 The formal and informal links of the DH to the capital are extremely complex and are only treated here in summary form. (2)

Formally the DH is responsible to only one body in the political organization of Bornu, viz. the Shehu-in-Council. This body under the chairmanship of the Waziri (the Chief Councillor) decides on the policies of the State, draws up the annual budget, heads up the various departments of the N.A., acts as a court in trying cases of N.A.

[649] (1) This move was not due to machinations in the N.A. A new, young British officer was at the time zealously working on the Bornu prison system and felt that more warders were needed in Maiduguri, which soon became the accepted policy. In the colonial service of Northern Nigeria, shifts and changes of various kinds can be labelled "improvements" in Reports, and the young officer receives some merit for his conscientiousness. C.f. the picture given by Joyce Cary, in his novel Mr. Johnson, of the British officers in Northern Nigeria, each with his own peculiar "improvement" enthusiasm.

[114] (2) A separate study of these relations is being prepared in collaboration with Prof. A. G. Frank, comparing the role of the DH with that of the Russian industrial manager.

631
634 personnel, and ratifies all appointments, dismissals and transfers of
642 the N.A. The DH may be informed of directives either from the Wazir's office or from the relevant Department which would also inform their local District personnel.

648 Officially, today, the British personnel both technical and administrative, perform an advisory, not an authoritative, part in the political organization. Although much of the "advice" is given at the center, there is some contact between the colonial service officials and the District during the touring duty of the officers. Such visits are always publicized beforehand to the local officials and the British officer is always accompanied by a Shehu's Representative. Technical officers are generally concerned with their own particular program in the area and unless they feel that the local authorities are being uncooperative, they do not interfere in local or State politics. The administrative officers have a much wider range of interests which covers all areas of government not directly under the concern of some technical department, i.e. taxation, courts of law, District Councils (local government) and complaints by the peasants against their chiefs. Some also take an interest in one or more technical branch and report their findings to the relevant department after their touring duties have brought them into contact with local programs.

634
203 Informally the DH has a house in the palace ward in the
[631] capital and his followers there are links between himself and the center. The Wakil (chief follower) in charge of the town house visits the Shehu regularly and represents the DH in the capital. Besides this source of contact with the center, the DH receives information from N.A. messengers, policeman and traders who travel continually from Maiduguri through the Districts. By the judicious giving of gifts to

634 By the judicious giving of gifts to
203 these travellers when they come to pay their respects in the District
[431] capital, the DH can build up a large communication network through
which he obtains a many-sided picture of events in the capital.(1) Fin-
634 ally the DH is linked to a faction in the Bornu state which has its most
665 powerful leaders in the capital. Traditionally these factions emerged
662 from the allegiance of nobles to the various agnatic lineage segments
[571] of the royal family. These remain today but are now joined by factions
representing some of the heads of the modern civil service. DH's linked
to more powerful factions receive better information and more protection
than those joined to weak ones. Thus the DH of Magumeri who had in-
herited a factional membership from his father which linked him to an
effete second son of a former Shehu received much less support than a-
nother DH who was linked to the faction headed by the present Wazizi
[203] (head of the Shehu's council and the N.A.). Because of the constant
contact of the Wazizi with all of the agencies of government including
the British, the second DH had a much more intimate knowledge of the
workings of Emirate politics at the center.

634 These informal links become important when it is realized
662 that the DH works under a system of conflicting standards all of which
648 can be enforced. Thus a DH must give large gifts periodically to his
faction leaders, to the Shehu, and to many other persons throughout the
state. The British see these as bribes, the Kanuri regard them as leg-
itimate and obligatory. Since such expenses are not envisaged in a
DH's salary he is forced to obtain the money illegally (according to
634 British standards). Again, the DH's success in obtaining tax receipts
651 is of major importance. One British officer told the writer that he did

(1) See the discussion above on nona and bərzum for the dynamics of interpersonal relations involved in "paying respects", pp.57-68.

• 634
651 not care what the causes were for a consistent drop in tax receipts, the very fact of diminution indicated an inadequate District organisation. In order to obtain the nomad cattle tax the DH must have a large group of horsed followers whom he keeps in food, clothing and all other expenses. If he does not maintain this large organisation he cannot collect the taxes; if he does then he must embezzle (by British standards) tax receipts in order to do so.

634
631
648 Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their enforcement change through time in their emphasis, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new N.A. councillor became interested in school latrines, and started punishing recalcitrant DH's for not maintaining adequate toilet facilities in the District school. A British officer interested in roads was replaced by one interested in prisons and so on. These conflicts in standards and changes in emphasis bring punishments in the form of dismissals, transfers to poorer paying Districts and even jail sentences - and all this emanates from the capital. The informal links between the DH and the center help him to predict the course of policy and prepare for any changes in enforcement of the conflicting standards under which he has to operate.

The Organization at the Center

643
[368] In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, the focal point of Bornu political organization.
[101] As a language and a culture Kanuri transcends its state boundaries, but within its organized bounds, the Shehu is the formal head of state. All measures, policies and appointments made by the central agencies are done in the name of the Shehu. Officially he installs office holders from the rank of Lawan up, at an investiture of "turbaning" ceremony which publicly proclaims the person's right to office. The Shehu is

4: Cohen E-5 (1956-1957) 1961
MS14 Kanuri MS14

242 177 gains running up to 300%[2]. In two cases for groundnuts and ten for millet, the increase on the test plot was less than 10% of that on the non-fertilized one. These twelve plots were owned by nine people: allowing for eight cases of negligence through absense or sickness, this leaves forty-three cultivators who experienced a significant (more than 10%) increase in productivity due to the action of super-phosphate fertilizer.

After the harvest season (November to January) had ended nothing more was done on the project for some time. Malam Abdulla prepared his report and turned it in to the Agriculture department at the capital, but remained in the Magumeri area. In March a District Council meeting was held in Magumeri, and the fertilizer was on the agenda for discussion.

242 177 634 The District Council, under the chairmanship of the District Head is composed of Village Heads, Ward Heads and some elder compound heads from the various villages and hamlets of the district. The body, a British innovation, discusses local planning, and votes on the disbursement of a small amount of money known as the District Council Fund.

This was a rather special occasion for the Council, for they were to have an African District Officer rather than a European, which was the usual practice. Generally speaking, the meeting differed considerably from all other Council meetings attended by the writer. The people seemed much more relaxed, much less stiff and formal compared to previous occasions. Comments passed back and forth between one person and another, whereas at previous sessions, people had sat silently, and never spoke unless spoken to first by a superior. The resulting loss in orderliness was offset by a large gain in freedom of expression. [782] Many participants remarked afterwards on this difference and spoke favourably of the African District Officer, who prayed with the people at both the beginning and end of the meeting.

242 177 During the meeting, the District Head announced that the super-phosphate fertilizer was to be available within the next month or two for sale to those who would like to buy it. Several

[2] The standard deviations for these averages are as follows: millet, 25.2; groundnuts, 20.1.

4: Cohen E-5 (1956-1957) 1961
MS14 Kanuri MS14

Linton (1952: 77) has also suggested that peasants view any attempts to change their economic condition with suspicion when these originate from their rulers. The peasant, often quite justifiably, feels that anything his rulers offer as a chance to improve conditions is probably much more to the ruler's advantage than to his own.

This was very certainly the case in Magumeri, and had occurred several times before. Thus, only a few weeks before the fertilizer demonstration began, the Village Head of Magumeri had tried to convince people of the worthiness of literacy. His argument centered around the idea that when literate the peasants would be able to catch their rulers, including himself, for issuing false tax receipts (Cohen and Frank, 1960). When the people refused to volunteer he forced a number of individuals to sign up for the literacy courses. It is difficult to say exactly how many were forced to "volunteer" for the fertilizer demonstration, but that coercion was involved is undoubtedly true.

On the other hand, a strange and almost unprecedented thing occurred at the final meeting when the people were asked whether or not they would use the fertilizer in the coming year. District Council meetings were usually very stiff affairs in which a formal agenda was followed under the guidance of a British District Officer. Very often a District Head rehearsed these "democratic" meetings first to make sure motions would be seconded, voted on properly, etc. On this occasion, an African District Officer was present, and the District Head gave the members of the Council a definite choice as to whether they would accept the fertilizer or not. Bornu is an autocratic country and subordinates are usually ordered about, unless the matter is a trivial one. The outward signs of democratic procedures introduced by colonial rule are very superficially imposed upon feudal autocracy, so that effective social action is carried out dictatorially. This is an ancient society and people are traditionally accustomed to these procedures. That dictatorial powers were not invoked over the decision to use, or not use, fertilizer in years to come, immediately defined it as a trivial and unimportant matter upon which people could make up their own minds.